



*Johannes Tillotson S.S. Theologiae  
Professor, Regiae Majestati a Sacris.  
Decanus Cantuariensis.*





*Johannes Tillotson S.S. Theologiae  
Professor, Regiae Majestati a Sacris.  
Decanus Cantuariensis.*

# SERMONS AND DISCOURSES:

Some of which  
Never before Printed.

---

BY  
JOHN TILLOTSON, D. D.  
Dean of *Canterbury*, Preacher to the  
Honourable Society of *Lincoln's-Inn*,  
and one of His Majesties Chaplains in  
Ordinary.

---

*The Third Volume.*

---

L O N D O N,  
Printed for B. Aylmer at the *Three Pigeons*  
against the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*; and  
W. Rogers at the *Sun* against *St. Dunstan's*  
*Church* in *Fleetstreet*: MDCLXXXVI.

SERMONS  
AND  
DISCOURSES:

Some of which

Never before Printed.

BY  
JOHN TILLOTSON, D.D.

Dean of St. Paul's, and  
one of the most  
illustrious Bishops in  
England.



The First Volume.

LONDON:  
Printed by J. Streater, at the  
Sign of the Anchor, in St. Dun-  
stons Church-yard, 1678.

## The Texts of each Sermon.

### S E R M O N. I.

**L**uke IX. 55, 56. *But he turned and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* Pag. 1

### S E R M O N. II.

**John XIII. 34, 35.** *A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.* 37

### S E R M O N. III.

**1 John IV. 1.** *Beloved believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God: because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* 69

### S E R M O N. IV.

**Hebrews VI. 16.** *And an Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* 115

### S E R M O N. V.

**Luke XX. 37, 38.** *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he callesth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: For all live to him.* 161

S E R-

# The Contents.

## SERMON CXVI on I

1 Cor. V. 6. *Wherefore we are, always confident; knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.* 27 XI 311

## DISCOURSE VII.

*A Persuasive to Frequent Communion in the Holy Sacrament.* On 1 Cor. 16, 27, 28. P. 255

## DISCOURSE VIII.

*A Discourse against Transubstantiation.* 309

## SERMON CX. XI

Joshua XXIV. 15. *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, what do ye wish whom you will serve.* 373 494

## SERMON CXI.

Jeremiah XII. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.* 441

## SERMON CXII.

Matthew XXIII. 12. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees; Hypocrites; for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men & ye neither go in your selves, neither suffer ye them that are knocking to go in.* 469

## IMPRIMATUR.

C. Alston. November 17. 1685.

Nov. 5. 1678.  
A  
SERMON

Preached before the  
Honourable House of Commons,  
Novemb. 5. 1678.

LUKE IX. 55, 56.

*But he turned, and rebuked them,  
and said, Ye know not what  
manner of Spirit ye are of;  
For the Son of Man is not come  
to destroy mens lives, but to  
save them.*

**A**MONG many other things,  
which may justly recommend  
the *Christian Religion* to the ap-  
probation of mankind, the in-  
trinſick goodness of it is moſt apt to  
B make

make impression upon the Minds of serious and considerate men. The Miracles of it are the great external evidence and confirmation of its truth and Divinity; but the morality of its doctrines and precepts, so agreeable to the best reason and wisest apprehensions of mankind, so admirably fitted for the perfecting of our natures and the sweetning of the spirits and tempers of men, so friendly to human Society and every way so well calculated for the peace and order of the World. These are the things which our Religion glories in as her crown and excellency. *Miracles* are apt to awaken and astonish, and by a sensible and overpowering evidence to bear down the prejudices of infidelity; but there are secret charms in *goodness* which take fast hold of the hearts of men and do insensibly, but effectually, command our love and esteem.

And surely nothing can be more proper to the occasion of this Day, than a Discourse upon this Argument; which so directly tends to correct that unchristian spirit, and mistaken zeal, which hath been the cause of all our troubles and confusions, and had so powerfull an influence upon that horrid Tragedy which



which was designed, now near upon fourscore years ago, to have been acted as upon this Day.

And that we may the better understand the reason of our Saviour's reproof here in the Text, it will be requisite to consider the occasion of this hot and furious zeal which appeared in some of his Disciples. And that was this; Our Saviour was going from *Galilee* to *Jerusalem*, and being to pass through a Village of *Samaria* he sent messengers before him to prepare entertainment for him; but the People of that Place would not receive him, because he was going to *Jerusalem*: The reason whereof was, the *difference of Religion* which then was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*. Of which I shall give you this brief account.

The *Samaritans* were originally that Colony of the *Affyrians*, which we find in the Book of *Kings* was, upon the Captivity of the Ten Tribes, planted in *Samaria* by *Salmanassar*. They were Heathens and worshipped their own Idols, till they were so infested with Lions that for the redress of this mischief they desired to be instructed in the worship of the God of *Israel*, hoping by this means to



appease the anger of the God of the Country; and then they worshipped the God of *Israel* together with their own Idols; for so it is said in the History of the *Kings*, That they feared the Lord, and served their own Gods.

After the Tribe of *Judah* were returned from the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the Temple of *Jerusalem* was rebuilt, all the *Jews* were obliged by a solemn Covenant to put away their *Heathen Wives*. It happened that *Manasses*, a *Jewish* Priest, had married the Daughter of *Sanballat* the *Samaritan*; and being unwilling to put away his Wife, *Sanballat* excited the *Samaritans* to build a Temple upon Mount *Gerizim* near the City of *Samaria*, in opposition to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and made *Manasses* his Son-in-Law, Priest there.

Upon the building of this new Temple there arose a great feud between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, which in process of time grew to so violent a hatred that they would not so much as shew common civility to one another. And this was the reason why the *Samaritans* would not receive our Saviour in his journey, because they perceived he was going to worship at *Jerusalem*.

At

At this uncivil usage of our Saviour, two of his Disciples, *James* and *John*, presently take fire, and out of a well-meaning zeal for the honour of their Master, and of the true God, and of *Jerusalem* the true place of his worship, they are immediately for dispatching out of the way these Enemies of God, and Christ, and the true Religion; these *Hereticks* and *Schismatics*, for so they called one another: And to this end they desire our Saviour to give them power to call for fire from Heaven to consume them, as *Elias* had done in a like case, and that too not far from *Samaria*; and it is not improbable that their being so near the place where *Elias* had done the like before, might prompt them to this request.

Our Saviour seeing them in this heat notwithstanding all the reasons they pretended for their passion, and for all they sheltered themselves under the great Example of *Elias*, doth very calmly but severely reprove this temper of theirs, *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*

*Grotius* observes, that these two excellent Sentences are left out in a *Manuscript*

that is in *England*. I cannot tell what *Manuscript* he refers to, but if it were a Copy written out in the height of Popery, no wonder if some zealous Transcriber offended at this passage, struck it out of the Gospel, being confident our Saviour would not say any thing, that was so directly contrary to the current Doctrine and practice of those times. But thanks be to God, this admirable *Saying* is still preserv'd, and can never be made use of upon a fitter occasion.

*Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of: That is,* Ye own your selves to be my Disciples, but do you consider what Spirit now acts and governs you? Not *that* surely which my Doctrine designs to mould and fashion you into, which is not a furious and persecuting and destructive spirit, but mild and gentle and saving; tender of the lives and interests of men, even of those who are our greatest Enemies; You ought to consider, That you are not now under the rough and sour Dispensation of the Law, but the calm and peaceable Institution of the Gospel; to which the spirit of *Elias*, though he was a very good man in his time, would be altogether unsuitable. God permitted it then, under that imper-

imperfect way of Religion; but now under the Gospel it would be intolerable: For that designs universal love, and peace, and good-will; and now no difference of Religion, no pretence of zeal for God and Christ can warrant and justify this passionate and fierce, this vindictive and exterminating spirit:

*For the Son of Man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* He says indeed elsewhere, that he *was not come to send Peace, but a Sword*; which we are not to understand of the natural tendency of his Religion, but of the accidental event and effect of it, through the malice and perverseness of men: But here he speaks of the proper intention and design of his coming; *He came not to kill and destroy, but for the healing of the Nations*; for the salvation and redemption of Mankind, not onely *from the wrath to come*, but from a great part of the evils and miseries of this life: *He came to discountenance all fierceness and rage and cruelty in men, one towards another; to restrain and subdue that furious and unpeaceable Spirit, which is so troublesome to the world, and the cause of so many mischiefs and disorders in it: And to introduce a Religion which consults*

not only the eternal Salvation of mens souls, but their temporal peace and security, their comfort and happiness in this world.

The words thus explained contain this Observation, *That a revengefull and cruel and destructive Spirit, is directly contrary to the design and temper of the Gospel, and not to be excused upon any pretence of zeal for God and Religion.*

In the prosecution of this Argument, I shall confine my Discourse to these *Three heads.*

*First,* To shew the opposition of this spirit to the true Spirit and design of the Christian Religion.

*Secondly,* The unjustifiableness of it upon any pretence of zeal for God and Religion.

*Thirdly,* To apply this Discourse to the occasion of this Day.

- I. *First,* I shall shew the opposition of this spirit to the true Spirit and design of the Christian Religion: That it is directly opposite to the main and fundamental Precepts of the Gospel, and to the great Patterns and Examples of our Religion, our

our Blessed Saviour and the Primitive Christians.

I. This spirit which our Saviour here reproves in his Disciples, is directly opposite to the main and fundamental Precepts of the Gospel; which command us to love one another, and to love all men, even our very enemies; and are so far from permitting us to persecute those who hate us, that they forbid us to hate those who persecute us: They require us, to be mercifull as our Father which is in Heaven is mercifull; to be kind and tender-hearted, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us: And to put on as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, meekness and long-suffering, and to follow peace with all men, and to shew all meekness to all men: And particularly the Pastors and Governors of the Church are especially charged to be of this temper: The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth. To all which Precepts, and many more that I might reckon up, nothing



thing can be more plainly opposite than inhumane Cruelties and Persecutions, treacherous Conspiracies and bloody Massacres, a barbarous Inquisition, and a *holy League* to extirpate all that differ from us. And in stead of *instructing in meekness those that oppose themselves* to convert men with fire and faggot, and to teach them as *Gideon* did the *men of Succoth with briars and thorns*; and instead of waiting for their repentance, and endeavouring to recover them out of the snare of the Devil, to put them quick into his hands, and to dispatch them to Hell as fast as is possible. If the precepts of Christianity can be contradicted, surely it cannot be done more grossly and palpably than by such practises.

2. This Spirit is likewise directly opposite to the great *Paterns* and Examples of our Religion, our *Blessed Saviour*, and the *Primitive Christians*. It was prophesied of our *Saviour* that he should be the *Prince of peace*, and should make it one of his great businesses upon earth, to make peace in heaven and earth, to reconcile men to God and to one another, to take up all those feuds, and to extinguish all those animosities that were in the world; to bring to agreement and a peace-

peaceable demeanour one towards another those that were most distant in their tempers and interests, to *make the lamb and the wolf lie down together, that there might be no more destroying nor devouring in all God's holy mountain*; that is, that that cruel and destructive spirit which prevailed before in the world should then be banished out of all Christian societies.

And in conformity to these predictions, when our Saviour was born into the world the Angels sang that heavenly *Anthem, Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will among men*. And when he appeared in the world his whole life and carriage was gentle and peaceable, full of meekness and charity. His great business was to be beneficial to others, to seek and to save that which was lost; *he went about doing good*, to the bodies and to the souls of men: his miracles were not destructive to mankind, but healing and charitable. He could, if he had pleased, by his miraculous power have confounded his enemies, and have thundred out death and destruction against the Infidel world, as his pretended *Vicar* hath since done against Hereticks. But intending that his Religion should be  
propa-



propagated in human ways, and that Men should be drawn to the profession of it by the *bands of love* and the *cords of a man*, by the gentle and peaceable methods of Reason and persuasion; he gave no example of a furious zeal and religious rage against those who despised his Doctrine. It was propounded to men for their great advantage, and they rejected it at their utmost peril. It seemed good to the Author of this institution to compell no man to it by temporal punishments. When he went about making proselytes he offered violence to no man, only said, *If any man will be my disciple, If any man will come after me.* And when his disciples were leaving him he does not set up an Inquisition to torture and punish them for their defection from the faith, only says, *Will ye also go away?*

And in imitation of this blessed Patern the Christian Church continued to speak and act for several Ages. And this was the language of the holy Fathers, *Lex nova non se vindicat ultore gladio*, the Christian Law doth not avenge it self by the sword. This was then the style of Councils, *Nemini ad credendum vim inferre*, to offer violence to no man to compell him to the Faith. I proceed in the

Second

*Second place, to shew the Unjustifiableness of this spirit upon any pretence whatsoever of zeal for God and Religion.* No case can be put with Circumstances of greater advantage and more likely to justify this spirit and temper, than the case here in the Text. Those against whom the Disciples would have called for fire from heaven, were Hereticks and Schismatics from the true Church; they had affronted our Saviour himself in his own person; the honour of God, and of that Religion which he had set up in the world, and of Jerusalem which he had appointed for the place of his worship were all concerned in this case: so that if ever it were warrantable to put on this fierce and furious zeal, here was a case that seemed to require it: But even in these circumstances our Saviour thinks fit to rebuke and discountenance this spirit, *Ie know not what manner of spirit ye are of.* And he gives such a reason as ought in all differences of Religion, how wide soever they be, to deter men from this temper, *For the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them;* that is, the Spirit is utterly inconsistent with the great design of Christian Reli-

Religion, and the end of our Saviour's coming into the world.

And now what hath the Church of *Rome* to plead for her cruelty to men for the cause of Religion, which the Disciples might not much better have pleaded for themselves in their case? what hath she to say against those who are the objects of her cruelty and persecution, which would not have held against the *Samaritans*? Does she practice these severities out of a zeal for truth, and for the honour of God, and Christ, and the true Religion? Why upon these very accounts it was, that the Disciples would have called for *fire from Heaven* to have destroyed the *Samaritans*. Is the Church of *Rome* perswaded that those whom she persecutes are Hereticks and Schismaticks, and that no punishment can be too great for such offenders? So the Disciples were perswaded of the *Samaritans*; and upon much better grounds: Only the Disciples had some excuse in their case, which the Church of *Rome* hath not; and that was Ignorance: And this apology our Saviour makes for them, *ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*: They had been bred up in the Jewish Religion, which gave some indulgence to  
this

this kind of temper, and they were able to cite a great Example for themselves; besides, they were then but learners and not thoroughly instructed in the Christian Doctrine. But in the Church of *Rome*, whatever the case of particular persons may be, as to the whole Church and the Governing part of it, this ignorance is wilfull and affected, and therefore inexcusable. For the Christian Religion, which they profess to embrace, does as plainly teach the contrary as it does any other matter whatsoever: and it is not more evident in the New Testament that Christ died for sinners, than that Christians should not kill one another for the misbelief of any Article of *revealed* Religion; much less for the disbelief of such Articles as are *invented* by men, and imposed as the Doctrines of Christ.

You have heard what kind of *Spirit* it is, which our Saviour here reproves in his Disciples. It was a furious and destructive *Spirit*, contrary to Christian charity and goodness. But yet this may be said in mitigation of their fault, that they themselves offered no violence to their enemies: They left it to God, and no doubt would have been very glad that he would have manifested his severity

rity upon them, by sending down fire from Heaven to have consumed them.

But there is a much worse Spirit than this in the world, which is not only contrary to *Christianity*, but to the common Principles of *Natural Religion*, and even to *Humanity* it self: Which by falsehood and perfidiousness, by secret plots and conspiracies, or by open sedition and rebellion, by an Inquisition or a Massacre; by deposing and killing Kings, by fire and sword, by the ruine of their Country, and betraying it into the hands of Foreigners; and in a word, by dissolving all the bonds of humane Society, and subverting the peace and order of the World, *that is*, by all the wicked ways imaginable doth incite men to promote and advance their Religion. As if all the world were made for *them*, and there were not only no other Christians, but no other Men besides themselves; as *Babylon* of old proudly vaunted, *I am, and there is none besides me*: And as if the God, whom the Christians worship, were not the God of order but of confusion; as if he whom we call the Father of mercies were delighted with cruelty, and could not have a more pleasing sacrifice offered to him than a Massacre, nor put a greater honour

honour upon his Priests than to make them Judges of an Inquisition, *that is*, the inventers and decreers of torments for men more righteous and innocent than themselves.

Thus to misrepresent God and Religion, is to devest them of all their Majesty and Glory. For if that of *Seneca* be true, that *sine bonitate nulla majestas*, without Goodness there can be no such thing as Majesty, then to separate goodness and mercy from God, compassion and charity from Religion, is to make the two best things in the world, God and Religion, good for nothing.

How much righter apprehensions had the *Heathen* of the Divine Nature, which they looked upon as so benign and beneficial to mankind, that (as *Tully* admirably says) *Dii immortales ad usum hominum fabrefacti penè videantur*, The nature of the immortal Gods may almost seem to be exactly framed for the benefit and advantage of men. And as for Religion, they always speak of it as the great band of humane Society, and the foundation of truth, and fidelity, and justice among men. But when Religion once comes to supplant moral Righteousness, and to teach men the absurdest things in the

C

world,



world, to lye for the truth, and to kill men for God's sake : when it serves to no other purpose, but to be a bond of conspiracy, to inflame the tempers of men to a greater fierceness, and to set a keener edge upon their spirits, and to make them *ten times more the children of wrath and cruelty than they were by nature*, then surely it loses its nature and ceases to be Religion : For let any man say worse of *Atheism and Infidelity*, if he can. And, for God's sake, what is Religion good for, but to reform the manners and dispositions of men, to restrain humane nature from violence and cruelty, from fallhood and treachery, from Sedition and Rebellion ? Better it were there were no *revealed Religion*, and that humane nature were left to the conduct of its own principles and inclinations, which are much more mild and mercifull, much more for the peace and happiness of humane Sociery ; than to be acted by a Religion that inspires men with so wild a fury, and prompts them to commit such outrages ; and is continually supplanting Government, and undermining the welfare of mankind ; in short, such a Religion as teaches men to propagate and advance it self by *means* so evidently con-

contrary to the very nature and end of all Religion.

And this, if it be well considered, will appear to be a very convincing way of reasoning, by shewing the last result and consequence of such Principles, and of such a Train of Propositions, to be a most gross and palpable absurdity. For example, We will at present admit *Popery* to be the true Religion, and their Doctrines of *extirpating Hereticks*, of the lawfulness of *deposing Kings* and subverting Government by all the cruel and wicked ways that can be thought of, to be, as in truth they are, the Doctrines of this Religion: In this Case, I would not trouble my self to debate particulars; but if in the gross, and upon the whole matter it be evident that such a Religion as this is as bad or worse than Infidelity and no Religion, this is conviction enough to a wise man, and as good as a Demonstration, that this is not the true Religion, and that it cannot be from God.

How much better Teachers of Religion were the old *Heathen Philosophers*? In all whose Books and Writings there is not one Principle to be found of Treachery or Rebellion; nothing that gives the least countenance to an *Association*



or a Massacre, to the betraying of ones Native Country, or the cutting of his Neighbours throat for difference in opinion. I speak it with grief and shame; because the credit of our common Christianity is somewhat concerned in it, that *Panæti*us and *Antipater* and *Diogenes* the *Stoick*, *Tully* and *Plutarch* and *Seneca* were much honester and more Christian *Casuits*, than the *Jesuits* are; or the generality of the *Casuits* of any other Order, that I know of, in the Church of Rome. I come now in the

III. *Third* and last place, to make some Application of this Discourse.

I. Let not Religion suffer for those faults and miscarriages which really proceed from the ignorance of Religion, and from the want of it. That under colour and pretence of Religion, very bad things are done, is no argument that Religion it self is not good: Because the best things are liable to be perverted and abused to very ill purposes, nay *the corruption of them is commonly the worst*; as, they say, the richest and noblest Wines make the sharpest Vinegar. *If the light that is in you, saith our Saviour, be dark-*

*darkness, how great is that darkness?*

2. Let us beware of that *Church* which countenanceth this *unchristian spirit* here condemned by our Saviour; and which teaches such *Doctrines*, and warrants such *Practices* as are consonant thereto. You all know, without my saying so, that I mean the *Church of Rome*; in which are taught such *Doctrines* as these, That Hereticks, *that is*, all who differ from them in matters of Faith, are to be extirpated by fire and sword; which was decreed in the *third* and *fourth Lateran Councils*, where all Christians are strictly charged to endeavour this to the uttermost of their power, *Sicut reputari cupiunt & haberi fideles, as they desire to be esteemed and accounted Christians*. Next their *Doctrines* of *deposing Kings*, and of *absolving their subjects from obedience to them*; which were not only universally believed, but practised by the *Popes* and *Roman Church* for several Ages. Indeed this Doctrine hath not been at all times alike frankly and openly avowed, but it is undoubtedly theirs; and hath frequently been put in execution, though they have not thought it so convenient at all turns to make profession of it. It is a certain kind of Engine, which is to be scru'd up

or let down as occasion serves; and is commonly kept like *Goliath's* Sword in the *Sanctuary* behind the *Ephod*, but yet so that the *High-Priest* can lend it out upon an extraordinary occasion.

And for *Practices* consonant to these *Doctrines*, I shall go no further than the horrid and bloody *Design* of this *Day*. Such a *Mystery* of Iniquity, as had been *hid from ages and generations*; Such a Master-piece of Villany, as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor ever before entered into the heart of man; So prodigiously Barbarous, both in the substance and circumstances of it, as is not to be paralleld in all the voluminous Records of Time, from the foundation of the World.

Of late years our *Adversaries*, for so they have made themselves without any provocation of ours, have almost had the impudence to deny so plain a matter of fact; but I wish they have not taken an effectual course by fresh *Conspiracies*, of equal or greater horreur, to confirm the belief of it with a witness. But I shall not anticipate what will be more proper for another *Day*, but confine my self to the present Occasion.

I will

I will not trouble you with the particular Narrative of this dark Conspiracy, nor the obscure manner of its discovery, which *Bellarmino* himself acknowledges not to have been *without a Miracle*. Let us thank God that it was so happily discovered and disappointed, so as I hope their present design will be by the same wonderfull and mercifull providence of God towards a most unworthy People. And may the lameness and halting of *Ignatius Loyola*, the Founder of the *Jesuits*, never depart from that Order, but be a Fate continually attending all their villanous Plots and Contrivances.

I shall only observe to you, that after the discovery of this Plot the Authors of it were not convinced of the evil, but sorry for the miscarriage of it. Sir *Everard Digby*, whose very original Papers and Letters are now in my hands, after he was in Prison, and knew he must suffer, calls it *the best Cause*; and was extremely troubled to hear it censured by *Catholicks and Priests*, contrary to his expectation, for a great sin: Let me tell you, says he, what a grief it is, to hear **THAT** so much condemned, which I did believe would have been otherwise thought of by *Catholicks*. And yet he concludes

that Letter with these words: *In how full joy should I dye, if I could do any thing for the Cause which I love more than my life.* And in another Letter he says, he could have said something to have mitigated the odium of this business, as to that Point of involving those of his own Religion in the common ruine, *I dare not (says he) take that course that I could to make it appear less odious, for divers were to have been brought out of danger, who now would rather hurt them than atherwise.* I do not think there would have been three worth the saving that should have been lost. And as to the rest, that were to have been swallow'd up in that destruction, he seems not to have the least relenting in his mind about them. All doubts he seems to have look'd upon as temptations, and intreats his Friends to pray for the pardoning of his not sufficient striving against temptations since this business was undertook.

Good God! that any thing that is called Religion should so perfectly strip men of all humanity, and transform the mild and gentle race of mankind into such Wolves and Tygers: that ever a pretended zeal for Thy glory should instigate men to dishonour Thee at such a rate,

rate. It is believed by many, and not without cause, that the Pope and his Faction are the *Antichrist*. I will say no more than I know in this matter; I am not so sure that it is *he* that is particularly designed in Scripture by that Name, as I am of the main *Articles* of the Christian Faith; but however that be, I challenge *Antichrist* himself, whoever he be, and whenever he comes, to do worse and wickedder things than these.

But I must remember my *Text*, and take heed of imitating that *Spirit* which is there condemned, whilst I am inveighing against it. And in truth it almost looks uncharitably to speak the truth in these matters, and barely to relate what these men have not blush'd to do. I need not, nay I cannot, aggravate these things, they are too horrible in themselves, even when they are express'd in the softest and gentlest words.

I would not be understood to charge every particular person who is, or hath been in the *Roman* Communion, with the guilt of these or the like practises: But I must charge their Doctrines and Principles with them; I must charge the *Heads* of their Church, and the prevalent teaching



teaching and governing part of it, who are usually the contrivers and abettors, the executioners and applauders of these cursed Designs.

I do willingly acknowledge the great Piety and Charity of several persons who have lived and dyed in that Communion, as *Erasmus*, Father *Paul*, *Thuanus*, and many others; who had in truth more goodness than the Principles of that Religion do either incline men to, or allow of. And yet he that considers how universally almost the *Papists* in *Ireland* were engaged in that *Massacre*, which is still fresh in our memories, will find it very hard to determine how many degrees of innocency and good nature, or of coldness and indifferency in Religion, are necessary to overballance the fury of a blind zeal and a misguided Conscience.

I doubt not but *Papists* are made like other men. Nature hath not generally given them such savage and cruel dispositions, but their Religion hath made them so. Whereas true Christianity is not only the best, but the best-natur'd Institution in the world; and so far as any Church is departed from good nature, and become cruel and barbarous, so far

is

is it degenerated from Christianity. I am loth to say it, and yet I am confident 'tis very true; That many *Papists* would have been excellent persons and very good men, if their Religion had not hindered them; if the Doctrines and Principles of their Church had not perverted and spoiled their natural dispositions.

I speak not this to exasperate *You*, worthy Patriots and the great Bulwark of our Religion, to any unreasonable or unnecessary, much less *unchristian* Severities against them: No, let us not do like them; let us never do any thing for Religion that is contrary to it: But I speak it to awaken your care thus far, That if their *Priests* will always be putting these pernicious Principles into the minds of the *People*, effectual Provision may be made, that it may never be in their power again to put them in practice. We have found by experience, that ever since the *Reformation* they have been continually pecking at the foundations of our Peace and Religion: When God knows we have been so far from thirsting after their blood, that we did not so much as desire their disquiet but in order to our own necessary safety, and indeed to theirs.

And



And God be praised for those matchless Instances which we are able to give of the generous humanity and Christian temper of the *English Protestants*. After *Q. Maryes* death, when the Protestant Religion was restored, Bishop *Bonner* notwithstanding all his Cruelties and Butcheries was permitted quietly to live and dye amongst us. And after the *Treason* of this *Day*, nay at this very time since the discovery of so barbarous a Design, and the highest provocation in the world, by the treacherous murder of one of His *Majesty's* Justices of the Peace, a very good Man and a most excellent Magistrate, who had been active in the discovery of this Plot; I say, after all this, and notwithstanding the continued and insupportable insolence of their carriage and behaviour, even upon this occasion, no violence, nay not so much as any incivility, that I ever heard of, hath been offered to any of them. I would to God they would but seriously consider this one difference between *our* Religion and *theirs*, and which of them comes nearest to the *Wisdom which is from above*, which is *peaceable*, and *gentle*, and *full of mercy*. And I do heartily pray, and have good hopes, that upon this occasion God will open

open their eyes so far, as to convince a great many among them, that *that* cannot be the true Religion which inspires men with such barbarous minds.

I have now done, and if I have been transported upon this Argument somewhat beyond my usual temper, the Occasion of this *Day* and our present circumstances will, I hope, bear me out. I have expressed my self all along with a just sense, and with no unjust severity, concerning these horrid Principles and Practises; but yet with great pity and tenderness towards those miserably seduced Souls, who have been deluded by them, and ensnared in them. And I can truly say, as the *Roman* Orator did of himself upon another occasion, *Mentura misericordem, patria severum, crudellem nec patria nec natura esse voluit.* My nature enclines me to be tender and compassionate; a hearty zeal for our Religion, and concernment for the publick welfare of my Countrey, may perhaps have made me a little severe; but neither my natural disposition, nor the temper of the *English* Nation, nor the *Genius* of the *Protestant*, that is the true *Christian* Religion, will allow me to be cruel.

For the future, Let us encourage our  
*selves*

*selves in the Lord our God; and commit our Cause, and the keeping of our Souls to Him in well doing: And, under God, let us leave it to the wisdom and care of His Majesty, and His two Houses of Parliament, to make a lasting Provision for the security of our Peace and Religion, against all the secret contrivances and open attempts of these sons of violence. And let us remember those words of David, Psal. 37. 12, 13, 14, 15. The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth: The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation: Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.*

And I hope, considering what God hath heretofore done, and hath now begun to do for us, we may take encouragement to our selves against all the Enemies of our Religion, which are confederated against us, in the words of the Prophet, Isa. 8. 9, 10. Associate your selves, O ye People, and ye shall be broken in pieces, and give ear, all ye of far Countreys: Gird your selves, and ye shall be broken.

*broken in pieces: Gird your selves, and ye shall be broken in pieces: Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought: Speak the word and it shall not stand. FOR GOD IS WITH US.*

And now what remains, but to make our most devout and thankfull acknowledgments to *Almighty God*, for the invaluable blessing of our *Reformed Religion*, and for the miraculous *Deliverance* of this *Day*, and for the wonderfull *Discovery* of the late horrid and barbarous *Conspiracy* against our *Prince*, our *Peace*, and our *Religion*.

*To Him therefore, our most gracious and mercifull God, our Shield, and our Rock, and our mighty Deliverer: Who hath brought us out of the land of Egypt, and out of the House of bondage; and hath set us free from Popish Tyranny and Superstition, a yoke which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear.*

*Who hath, from time to time, delivered us from the bloody and merciless designs of wicked and unreasonable men; and hath render'd all the plots and contrivances, the mischievous counsels and devices of these worse-than-Heathens, of none effect.*

*Who*

*Who did as upon this Day, rescue our King and our Princes, our Nobles and the Heads of our Tribes, the Governours of our Church and the Judges of the Land, from that fearfull Destruction which was ready to have swallowed them up.*

*Who still brings to light the hidden things of darkness, and hath hitherto preserved our Religion and Civil interests to us, in despite of all the malicious and restless attempts of our Adversaries.*

*Unto that great God, who hath done so great things for us, and hath saved us by a mighty Salvation: Who hath delivered us, and doth deliver us, and, we trust, will still deliver us; be glory and honour, thanksgiving and praise, from generation to generation. And let all the people say, Amen.*



A SER.

---

A  
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

At the First General Meeting of the Gentlemen  
and others born within  
the County of YORK.

---

D

MEMORIAL

PRESENTED

At the First General Meeting  
of the Gentlemen  
and others born within  
the County of YORK

F

Mr

P

to

an

m

of

H

so



To my Honoured  
FRIENDS and COUNTRYMEN,

Mr.	{	Hugh Frankland, Leonard Robinson, Abrah. Forbergill, William Fairfax, Thomas Johnson, John Hardesty,	}	Mr.	{	Gervas Wilcocks, George Pickering, Edward Duffield, John Topham, James Longbotham, Nathan Holroyd.	}
-----	---	---	---	-----	---	---	---

Stewards of the *Torkshire* Feast:

GENTLEMEN,

**T** HIS Sermon, which was  
first Preached, and is now  
Published at your desires, I dedicate  
to your Names, to whose prudence  
and care the direction and manage-  
ment of this First general Meeting  
of our Country-men was committed:  
Heartily wishing that it may be  
some way serviceable to the healing  
D 2 of

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

*of our unhappy Differences, and the  
restoring of Unity and Charity a-  
mong Christians, especially those of the  
Protestant Reform'd Religion. I am*

*Gentlemen,*

*Your affectionate Country-man*

*and humble Servant,*

*Jo. Tillotson.*

---

A  
S E R M O N

PREACHED

At the first general Meeting of  
the Gentlemen, and others, in  
and near *London*, who were born  
within the County of *York*.

---

J O H N XIII. 34, 35.

*A new Commandment I give unto you, that  
ye love one another; as I have loved  
you, that ye also love one another: By  
this shall all men know that ye are my  
Disciples, if ye love one another.*

**A**S the Christian Religion in gene-  
ral, is the best Philosophy and  
most perfect Institution of Life;  
containing in it the most entire  
and compleat System of moral Rules and  
Precepts that was ever yet extant in the

D 3

World:

World: so it peculiarly excells in the Doctrine of *Love* and *Charity*; earnestly recommending, strictly enjoining, and vehemently and almost perpetually pressing and inculcating the excellency and necessity of this best of Graces and Virtues; and propounding to us for our imitation and encouragement the most lively and heroical Example of kindness and charity that ever was, in the Life and Death of the great Founder of our Religion, *the author and finisher of our Faith, Jesus* the Son of God.

So that the Gospel, as it hath in all other parts of our Duty cleared the dimness and obscurity of *natural* light and supplied the imperfections of former *Revelations*, so doth it most eminently reign and triumph in this great and blessed vertue of *Charity*; in which all the Philosophy and Religions that had been before in the World, whether *Jewish* or *Pagan*, were so remarkably defective.

With great reason then doth our blessed Saviour call this *a new Commandment*, and assert it to himself as a thing peculiar to his Doctrine and Religion; considering how imperfectly it had been taught, and how little it had been practised in the World before: *A new Commandment I give*

give unto you, that ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another : By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.

I shall reduce my Discourse upon these Words under these six Heads.

*First*, To enquire in what sense our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another a new Commandment.

*Secondly*, To declare to you the nature of this Commandment, by instancing in the chief Acts and Properties of Love.

*Thirdly*, To consider the degrees and measures of our Charity with regard to the several Objects about which it is exercised.

*Fourthly*, Our Obligation to this Duty not only from our Saviour's Authority, but likewise from our own Nature, and from the Reasonableness and Excellency of the thing commanded.

*Fifthly*, The great Example which is here propounded to our imitation ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Sixthly and Lastly, The Place and Rank which this Precept holds in the Christian Religion. Our Saviour makes it the proper badge of a *Disciple*, the distinctive mark and character of our Profession; *By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

I.

I. *In what sense our Saviour calls this Commandment of loving one another a new Commandment.* Not that it is absolutely and altogether New, but upon some special accounts. For it is a branch of the ancient and primitive Law of Nature. *Aristotle* truly observes that upon grounds of natural kindred and likeness *all men are friends*, and kindly disposed towards one another. And it is a known Precept of the *Jewish* Religion, to love our Neighbour as our selves.

In some sense then, it is *no new Commandment*; and so *St. John*, who was most likely to understand our Saviour's meaning in this particular, (all his preaching and writing being almost nothing else but an inculcating of this one Precept) explains this matter, telling us that in several respects it was, and it was not a new Commandment, *1 Joh. 2. 7, 8. Brethren, I write na new Commandment un-*

to.

to you, but that which ye had from the beginning, that is ; from ancient Times : But then he corrects himself ; Again, *και̃ν*, but yet, a new Commandment I write unto you. So that though it was not absolutely new, yet upon divers considerable accounts it was so, and in a peculiar manner proper to the *Evangelical* Institution ; and is in so exprefs and particular a manner ascribed to the teaching of the *Holy Ghost* , which was conferr'd upon Christians by the Faith of the Gospel, as if there hardly needed any outward instruction and exhortation to that purpose, 1 *Theff.* 4. 9. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are *θεοδιδασκτοι*, divinely taught and inspired to love one another.

This Commandment then of loving one another is by our Lord and Saviour so much enlarged as to the *Object* of it, beyond what either the *Jews* or *Heathens* did understand it to be, extending to all mankind, and even to our greatest enemies ; so greatly advanced and heightened as to the *Degree* of it, even to the laying down of our lives for one another ; so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, so very much urged and insisted upon,



upon, that it may very well be called a *new Commandment* : for though it was not altogether unknown to mankind before, yet it was never so taught, so encouraged ; never was such an illustrious Example given of it, never so much weight and stress laid upon it by any Philosophy or Religion that was before in the world.

- II. II. I shall endeavour to declare to you the *Nature of this Commandment, or the Duty required by it*. And that will best be done, by instancing in the chief *Acts* and *Properties* of Love and Charity. As, *humanity* and kindness in all our carriage and behaviour towards one another ; for Love smooths the dispositions of men so that they are not apt to grate upon one another : Next, to *rejoyce* in the good and happiness of one another, and to *grieve* at their evils and sufferings ; for Love unites the interests of men so as to make them affected with what happens to another as if it were in some sort their own case : Then, to contribute as much as in us lies to the happiness of one another, by relieving one anothers wants and redressing their misfortunes : Again, tenderness of their good name and reputation ; a proneness to interpret all the words

words and actions of men to the best sense ; patience and forbearance towards one another ; and when differences happen, to manage them with all possible calmness and kindness, and to be ready to forgive and to be reconciled to one another ; to pray one for another ; and if occasion be, at least if the publick good of Christianity require it, to be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, and to sacrifice our selves for the furtherance of their Salvation.

III. We will consider the *Degrees and measures of our Charity, with regard to the various Objects about which it is exercised.* III.

And as to the *negative* part of this Duty, it is to be extended equally towards all. We are not to hate or bear ill-will to any man, or to doe him any harm or mischief ; *Love worketh no evil to his neighbour.* Thus much charity we are to exercise towards all without any exception, without any difference.

And as to the *positive* part of this Duty, we should bear an universal good-will to all men, wishing every man's happiness, and praying for it as heartily as for our own : And if we be sincere herein, we shall

shall be ready upon all occasions to procure and promote the welfare of all men. But the outward acts and testimonies of our Charity neither can be actually extended to all, nor ought to be to all alike. We do not know the wants of all, and therefore our knowledge of persons, and of their conditions doth necessarily limit the effects of our Charity within a certain compass; and of those we do know, we can but relieve a small part for want of ability. Whence it becomes necessary, that we set some rules to our selves for the more discreet ordering of our Charity; such as these: Cases of extremity ought to take place of all other. Obligations of Nature, and nearness of Relation, seem to challenge the next place. Obligations of kindness, and upon the account of benefits received, may well lay the next claim. And then the *Household of Faith* is to be peculiarly considered. And after these, the merit of the persons, and all circumstances belonging to them, are to be weighed and valued: Those who labour in an honest calling, but are oppress'd with their charge; those who are fallen from a plentiful condition, especially by misfortune, and the providence of God, without their own fault; those who

who have relieved others, and have been eminently charitable and beneficial to mankind; and lastly, those whose visible necessities and infirmities of body or mind, whether by age or by accident, do plead for them: All these do challenge our more especial regard and consideration.

IV. We will consider *our Obligations to this Duty, not onely from our Saviour's Authority, but likewise from our own Nature, and from the reasonableness and Excellency of the thing commanded.* This is the Commandment of the *Son of God*, who came down from Heaven with full Authority to declare the Will of God to us. And this is peculiarly *His Commandment*, which he urgeth upon his Disciples so earnestly, and so as if he almost required nothing else in comparison of this. *Joh. 15. 12. This is my Commandment, that ye love one another: And vers. 17. These things I command you, that ye love one another.* As if this were the end of all his Precepts, and of his whole Doctrine, to bring us to the practice of this Duty. And so St. *John*, the *loving and beloved Disciple*, speaks of it as the great *Message* which the Son of God was to deliver to mankind, 1 *Joh. 3. 11. This is the Message which ye have*

IV.

have heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. And ver. 23. This is his Commandment, that we should believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment. And chap. 4. v. 21. This Commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.

But besides the Authority of our Saviour, we have a precedent obligation to it from our own Nature, and from the Reasonableness and Excellency of the thing it self. The frame of our Nature disposeth us to it, and our inclination to Society, in which there can be no pleasure, no advantage, without mutual love and kindness. And Equity also calls for it, for that we our selves wish and expect kindness from others is conviction enough to us that we owe it to others. The fulfilling of this Law is the great perfection of our Natures, the advancement and enlargement of our Souls, the chief ornament and beauty of a great mind. It makes us like to God, the best and most perfect and happiest Being, in that which is the prime excellency and happiness and glory of the Divine Nature.

And the advantages of this temper are unspeakable and innumerable. It freeth  
our

our souls from those unruly and troublesome and disquieting Passions which are the great torment of our Spirits; from Anger and Envy, from Malice and Revenge, from Jealousie and Discontent. It makes our minds calm and cheerfull, and puts our souls into an easie posture, and into good humour, and maintains us in the possession and enjoyment of our selves: It preserves men from many mischiefs and inconveniences, to which enmity and ill-will do perpetually expose them: It is apt to make Friends, and to gain Enemies, and to render every condition either pleasant, or easie, or tolerable to us. So that to love others, is the truest love to our selves, and doth redound to our own unspeakable benefit and advantage in all respects.

It is a very considerable part of our Duty, and almost equall'd by our Saviour with the *first and great Commandment of the Law*. It is highly acceptable to God, most beneficial to others, and very comfortable to our selves. It is the easiest of all Duties, and it makes all others easie; the pleasure of it makes the pains to signify nothing, and the delightfull reflection upon it afterwards is a most ample reward of it. It is a Duty in every man's power

to perform, how strait and indigent soever his fortune and condition be. The poorest man may be as charitable as a Prince; he may have as much kindness in his heart, though his hand cannot be so bountifull and munificent. Our Saviour instanteth in the giving of a *cup of cold water*, as a Charity that will be highly accepted and rewarded by God. And one of the most celebrated Charities that ever was, how small was it for the matter of it, and yet how great in regard of the mind that gave it: I mean the Widow's *two mites*, which she *cast into the Treasury*: One could hardly give less, and yet none can give more, for she gave *all that she had*. All these excellencies and advantages of Love and Charity, which I have briefly recounted, are so many Arguments, so many obligations to the practice of this Duty.

V.

V. We will consider *the great Instance and Example which is here propounded to our imitation*; As I have loved you, that ye also love one another. The Son of God's becoming man, his whole Life, his bitter Death and Passion, all that he did and all that he suffered, was one great and continued proof and evidence of his mighty



mighty love to mankind. The greatest Instance of love among men, and that too but very rare, is for a Man to lay down his life for another, for his Friend; but the Son of God died for all mankind, and we were all his enemies. And should we not cheerfully imitate the Example of that great Love and Charity, the effects whereof are so comfortable, so beneficial, so happy to every one of us. Had he not loved us, and died for us, we had certainly perish'd, we had been miserable and undone to all eternity.

And to perpetuate this great Example of Charity, and that it might be always fresh in our memories, the great Sacrament of our Religion was on purpose instituted for the Commemoration of this great love of the Son of God, in laying down his life and shedding his precious blood for the wicked and rebellious Race of mankind. But I have not time to enlarge upon this noble Argument as it deserves.

VI. The *last* thing to be considered is *the place and rank which this Precept and Duty holds in the Christian Religion.* Our blessed Saviour here makes it the proper badge and cognisance of our Profession;

E

By

By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another. The different Sects among the Jews had some peculiar Character to distinguish them from one another: The Scholars of the several great Rabbi's among them had some peculiar Sayings and Opinions, some Customs and Traditions whereby they were severally known: And so likewise the Disciples of John the Baptist were particularly remarkable for their great Austerities. In allusion to these distinctions of Sects and Schools among the Jews, our Saviour fixeth upon this mark and character whereby his Disciples should be known from the Disciples of any other Institution, *A mighty love and affection to one another.*

Other Sects were distinguish'd by little Opinions, or by some external Rites and Observances in Religion; but our Saviour pitcheth upon that which is the most real and substantial, the most large and extensive, the most usefull and beneficial, the most humane and the most divine quality of which we are capable.

This was his great Commandment to his Disciples, before he left the World: This was the Legacy he left them, and the effect of his last Prayers for them;  
And

And for this end, among others, he instituted the Sacrament of his blessed Body and Blood, to be a lively remembrance of his great Charity to mankind, and a perpetual bond of Love and Union amongst his Followers.

And the *Apostles* of our Lord and Saviour do upon all occasions recommend this to us, as a principal Duty and Part of our Religion; telling us, That in *Christ Jesus*, that is, in the Christian Religion, nothing will avail, no not *Faith* it self, unless it be enlivened and inspir'd by *Charity*; That *Love is the end of the Commandment*, τὸ τέλος τῆς παραγγελίας, the end of the Evangelical declaration, the first *Fruit of the Spirit*, the spring and root of all those Graces and Vertues which concern our duty towards one another: That it is the *sum* and abridgement, the accomplishment and fulfilling of the whole Law: That without this, whatever we pretend to in Christianity, we are nothing, and our Religion is vain: That this is the greatest of all Graces and Vertues, greater than *Faith* and *Hope*; and of perpetual use and duration, *Charity never fails*.

And therefore they exhort us above all things to endeavour after it, as the Crown

of all other Vertues; *Above all things have fervent Charity among your selves,* saith St. Peter: And St. Paul, having enumerated most other Christian Vertues, exhorts us above all to strive after this, *And above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of perfection.* This St. John makes one of the most certain signs of our love to God, and the want of it an undeniable argument of the contrary: *If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar; for he who loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* This he declares to be one of the best evidences that we are in a state of Grace and Salvation, *Hereby we know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren.*

So that well might our blessed Saviour chuse this for the badge of his Disciples, and make it the great Precept of the best and most perfect Institution? Other things might have served better for pomp and ostentation, and have more gratified the Curiosity, or Enthusiasm, or Superstition of mankind, but there is no quality in the World which upon a sober and impartial consideration is of a more solid and intrinsick value.

And in the first Ages of Christianity,  
the

the Christians were very eminent for this Vertue, and particularly noted for it; *Nobis notam inurit apud quosdam, it is a mark and brand, set upon us by some, saith Tertullian*; and he tells us that it was proverbially said among the *Heathen, Behold how these Christians love one another. Lucian*, that great scoffer at all Religion, acknowledgeth in behalf of Christians, that this was the great Principle which *their Master* had instill'd into them: And *Julian*, the bitterest Enemy that Christianity ever had, could not forbear to propound to the *Heathen* for an example the charity of the *Galileans*, for so by way of reproach he calls the *Christians*, who (says he) gave up themselves to humanity and kindness; which he acknowledgeth to have been very much to the advantage and reputation of our Religion: And in the same Letter to *Arsacius*, the *Heathen* High Priest of *Galatia*, he gives this memorable Testimony of the *Christians*, that their Charity was not limited and confin'd onely to themselves, but extended even to their Enemies; which could not be said either of the *Jews* or *Heathens*: His words are these, *It is a*

shame, that when the Jews suffer none of theirs to beg, and the impious Galileans relieve not only their own, but those also of our Religion, that we onely should be defective in so necessary a Duty. By all which it is evident that Love and Charity is not onely the great Precept of our Saviour, but was in those first and best Times the general practice of his Disciples, and acknowledged by the *Heathens* as a very peculiar and remarkable quality in them.

The Application I shall make of this Discourse shall be threefold.

1. With relation to the Church of *Rome*.
2. With regard to our selves who profess the *Protestant* Reform'd Religion.
3. With a more particular respect to the occasion of this Meeting.

I. *First, With relation to the Church of Rome*: Which we cannot chuse but think of, whenever we speak of Charity and loving one another; especially having had so late a Discovery of their affection to us, and so considerable a testimony of the kindness and charity which they design'd towards us: such as may justly *make the ears of all that hear it to tingle*, and render

*Popery*

*Papery* execrable and infamous, a fright-  
full and a hateful thing to the end of the  
World.

It is now but too visible how grossly  
this great Commandment of our Saviour  
is contradicted, not onely by the Practi-  
ces of those in that Communion, from the  
*Pope* down to the meanest *Fryar*; but  
by the very Doctrines and Principles, by  
the *Genius* and Spirit of that Religion,  
which is wholly calculated for cruelty and  
persecution. Where now is that mark of  
a *Disciple*, so much insisted upon by our  
*Lord* and *Master*, to be found in that  
Church? And yet what is the *Christian*  
Church but the Society and Community  
of *Christ's Disciples*? Surely in all reason,  
that which our *Lord* made the distinctive  
Mark and Character of his *Disciples*,  
should be the principal mark of a true  
Church. *Bellarmino* reckons up no less  
than fifteen marks of the true Church, all  
which the Church of *Rome* arrogates to  
her self alone: But he wisely forgot that  
which is worth all the rest, and which  
our Saviour insists upon as the chief of all  
other, *A sincere Love and Charity to all*  
*Christians*: This he knew would by no  
means agree to his own Church.



But for all that, it is very reasonable that Churches as well as particular Christians should be judged by their Charity. The Church of *Rome* would engross all Faith to her self; Faith in its utmost perfection, to the degree and pitch of Infalibility: And they allow no body in the world, besides themselves, no though they believe all the Articles of the Apostles Creed, to have one grain of true Faith; because they do not believe upon the Authority of their Church, which they pretend to be the onely foundation of true Faith. This is a most arrogant and vain pretence; but admit it were true, yet in the Judgment of *St. Paul*, *though they had all Faith, if they have not Charity, they are nothing.*

The greatest wonder of all is this, that they who hate and persecute Christians most, do all this while the most confidently of all others pretend to be the Disciples of Christ, and will allow none to be so but themselves. *That* Church which excommunicates all other Christian Churches in the world, and if she could, would extirpate them out of the world, will yet needs assume to her self to be the onely Christian Church: As if our Saviour had said, *Hereby shall all men know*

know that ye are my Disciples, if ye hate, and excommunicate, and kill one another. What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? thou empty and impudent pretence of Chistianity!

Secondly, *With relation to our selves,* who profess the Protestant Reformed Religion. How is this great Precept of our Saviour not onely shamefully neglected, but plainly violated by us? And that not onely by private hatred and ill-will, quarrels and contentions in our civil conversation and intercourse with one another; but by most unchristian divisions and animosities in that common relation wherein we stand to one another, as *Brethren*, as *Christians*, as *Protestants*.

*Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?* And are we not in a more peculiar and eminent manner *Brethren*, being *all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*? Are we not all members of the same Body, and partakers of the same Spirit, and Heirs of the same blessed Hopes of eternal life?

So that being *Brethren* upon so many accounts, and by so many bonds and endearments all united to one another, and all travelling towards the same heavenly Coun-

II.

Country, *why do we fall out by the way, since we are Brethren?* Why do we not, as becomes *Brethren*, dwell together in unity? but are so apt to quarrel and break out into heats, to crumble into Sects and Parties, to divide and separate from one another upon every slight and trifling occasion.

Give me leave a little more fully to expostulate this matter, but very calmly and *in the spirit of meekness*, and in the name of our dear Lord who loved us all at such a rate as to die for us, to recommend to you this *new Commandment* of his, *that ye love one another*: Which is almost a *new Commandment* still, and hardly the worse for wearing; so seldom is it put on, and so little hath it been practised among Christians for several Ages.

Consider seriously with your selves; ought not the great matters wherein we are agreed, our Union in the Doctrines of the Christian Religion and in all the necessary Articles of that *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, in the same Sacraments, and in all the substantial parts of God's worship, and in the great Duties and Vertues of the Christian life, to be of greater force to unite us, than difference in doubtfull Opinions, and in  
little

little Rites and Circumstances of Worship,  
to divide and break us?

Are not the things about which we differ in their nature *indifferent*, that is, things about which there ought to be no difference among wise men? Are they not at a great distance from the life and essence of Religion, and rather good or bad as they tend to the Peace and Unity of the Church, or are made use of to Schism and Faction, then either necessary or evil in themselves? And shall little scruples weigh so far with us, as by breaking the Peace of the Church about them to endanger our whole Religion? Shall we take one another by *the throat for an hundred pence*, when our common Adversary stands ready to clap upon us an Action of *ten thousand talents*? Can we in good earnest be contented that rather than the *Surplice* should not be thrown out, *Popery* should come in? and rather than receive the Sacrament in the humble but indifferent posture of *kneeling*, to swallow the Camel of *Transubstantiation*, and adore the Elements of Bread and Wine for our God and Saviour? and rather than to submit to a *Set Form* of Prayer, to have the Service of God perform'd in an *unknown Tongue*?

Are

Are we not yet made sensible, *at least in this our Day*, by so clear a Demonstration as the Providence of God hath lately given us: and had not He been infinitely mercifull to us, might have proved the dearest and most dangerous Experiment that ever was: I say, are we not yet convinced, what mighty advantages our Enemies have made of our Divisions, and what a plentiful harvest they have had among us, during our Differences, and upon occasion of them; and how near their Religion was to have entred in upon us at once, at those wide breaches which we had made for it? And will we still take counsel of our Enemies, and chuse to follow that course to which, of all other, they who hate us and seek our ruine would most certainly advise and direct us? Will we freely offer them that advantage which they would be contented to purchase at any rate?

Let us after all our sad experience, at last take warning to keep a stedfast eye upon our chief Enemy, and not suffer our selves to be diverted from the consideration and regard of our greatest danger by the petty provocations of our Friends; so I chuse to call those who dissent from us in lesser matters, because I  
would

would fain have them so, and they ought in all reason to be so: But however they behave themselves, we ought not much to mind those who only sling dirt at us, whilst we are sure there are others who fly at our throats, and strike at our very hearts.

Let us learn this wisdom of our Enemies, who though they have many great differences among themselves, yet they have made a shift at this time to unite together to destroy us: And shall not we do as much to save our selves?

————— *fas est & ab hoste doceri.*

It was a Principle among the ancient Romans, a brave and a wise People, *donare inimicitias Reip.* to give up and sacrifice their private enmities and quarrels to the publick good and the safety of the Commonwealth. And is it not to every considerate man as clear as the Sun at Noonday, that nothing can maintain and support the Protestant Religion amongst us, and found our Church upon a Rock, so that when the rain falls, and the winds blow, and the floods beat upon it, it shall stand firm and unshaken: That nothing can be a Bulwark of sufficient force to resist

resist all the arts and attempts of Popery, but an *establish'd National Religion*, firmly united and compacted in all the parts of it. Is it not plain to every eye, that little *Sects and separate Congregations* can never do it; but will be like a Foundation of sand to a weighty Building, which whatever shew it may make cannot stand long, because it wants Union at the Foundation, and for that reason must necessarily want strength and firmness.

It is not for private persons to undertake in matters of publick concernment; but I think we have no cause to doubt, but the *Governours of our Church* (notwithstanding all the advantages of Authority, and we think of reason too on our side) are Persons of that Piety and Prudence, that for Peace sake, and in order to a firm Union among Protestants, they would be content, if that would do it, not to insist upon little things; but to yield them up, whether to the infirmity, or importunity, or, perhaps in some very few things, to the plausible exceptions of those who differ from us.

But then surely on the other side, men ought to bring along with them a peaceable disposition, and a mind ready to comply with the Church in which they were born



born and baptized; in all reasonable and lawfull things, and desirous upon any terms that are tolerable to return to the Communion of it: a mind free from passion and prejudice, from peevish exceptions, and groundless and endless scruples; not apt to insist upon little cavils and objections, to which the very best things, and the greatest and clearest Truths in the world are and always will be liable: And whatever they have been heretofore, to be henceforth no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive.

And if we were thus affected on all hands, we might yet be a happy Church and Nation; if we would govern our selves by these Rules and walk according to them, *peace would be upon us, and mercy, and on the Israel of God.*

Thirdly, I shall conclude all with a few words *in relation to the occasion of this present meeting.* I have all this while been recommending to you, from the Authority and Example of our Blessed Saviour, and from the nature and reason of the thing it self, this most excellent Grace and Vertue

Vertue of Charity, in the most proper Acts and Instances of it: But besides particular Acts of Charity to be exercised upon emergent occasions, there are likewise charitable Customs which are highly commendable, because they are more certain and constant, of a larger extent, and of a longer continuance: As the *Meeting* of the *Sons* of the *Clergy*, which is now form'd and establish'd into a *charitable Corporation*: And the *Anniversary Meetings* of those of the several *Counties* of *England*, who reside, or happen to be in *London*; for two of the best and noblest ends that can be, the maintaining of *Friendship*, and the promoting of *Charity*. These, and others of the like kind, I call *charitable Customs*, which of late years have very much obtained in this great and famous City. And it cannot but be a great pleasure and satisfaction to all good men, to see so generous, so humane, so Christian a disposition to prevail and reign so much amongst us.

The strange overflowing of vice and wickedness in our Land, and the prodigious increase and impudence of infidelity and impiety, hath of late years boaded very ill to us, and brought terrible Judgments upon this City and Nation, and  
seems

seems still to threaten us with more and greater : And the greatest comfort I have had under these sad apprehensions of God's displeasure hath been this, that though *bad* men were perhaps never worse in any Age, yet the *good*, who I hope are not a few, were never more truly and substantially good : I do verily believe there never were, in any Time, greater and more real effects of Charity ; not from a blind superstition, and an ignorant zeal, and a mercenary and arrogant and presumptuous principle of Merit, but from a sound knowledge, and a sincere love and obedience to God, or, as the *Apostle* expresses it, *out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.*

And who, that loves God and Religion, can chuse but take great contentment to see so general and forward an inclination in People this way ? Which hath been very much cherished of late years by this sort of Meetings : and that to very good purpose and effect, in many charitable contributions disposed in the best and wisest ways : And which likewise hath tended very much to the reconciling of the minds of men, and the allaying of those fierce heats and animosities which have been caused by our Civil

confusions, and Religious distractions. For there is nothing many times wanting to take away prejudice, and to extinguish hatred and ill-will, but an opportunity for men to see and understand one another; by which they will quickly perceive, that they are not such Monsters as they have been represented one to another at a distance.

We are, I think, one of the last *Countries* of *England* that have entred into this friendly and charitable kind of Society; Let us make amends for our late setting out by quickning our pace, that so we may overtake and outstrip those who are gone before us: Let not our Charity partake of the coldness of our Climate, but let us endeavour that it may be equal to the extent of our Countrey; and as we are incomparably the greatest *County* of *England*, let it appear that we are so by the largeness and extent of our Charity.

O Lord, who hast taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing, send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace, and of all Vertues: Without which whosoever liveth, is counted

*ted dead before thee. Grant this for thy  
only Son Jesus Christ's sake.*

*Now the God of Peace, who brought a-  
gain from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through  
the blood of the everlasting Covenant, make  
you perfect in every good work to do his will;  
working in you that which is well pleasing  
in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom  
be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

---

F 2

A

---

red hand, before thee. Grant this for thy  
only Son Jesus Christ's sake.

Now the God of Peace, who brought us  
again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,  
that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through  
the blood of the everlasting Covenant, making  
you perfect in every good work to do his will;  
working in you that which is well pleasing  
in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom  
be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A T

of  
ed  
of

# SERMON

Preached at

WHITE-HALL

April 4th. 1679.

I JOHN 4. 1.

*Beloved, believe not every Spirit,  
but try the Spirits whether they  
are of God: because many false  
Prophets are gone out into the  
World.*

**T**HIS caution and counsel was gi-  
ven upon occasion of the false  
Prophets and Teachers that  
were risen up in the beginning  
of the *Christian* Church, who endeavour-  
ed to seduce men from the true Doctrine  
of the Gospel delivered by the Apostles of



our Lord and Saviour. And these teaching contrary things, could not both be from God: and therefore St. *John* calls upon Christians to examine the Doctrines and Pretences of those new Teachers, whether they were from God or not. *Believe not every Spirit; that is*, not every one that takes upon him to be inspired and to be a Teacher come from God: *But try the Spirits; that is*, examine those that make this pretence, whether it be real or not; and examine the Doctrines which they bring, because there are many Impostors abroad in the World.

This is the plain sense of the Words: In which there are contained these four Propositions.

First, *That men may, and often do, falsely pretend to Inspiration.* And this is the reason upon which the Apostle grounds this Exhortation: *Because many false Prophets are gone out into the World*, therefore we should try who are true, and who are false.

Secondly, *We are not to believe every one that pretends to be inspired, and to teach a Divine Doctrine:* This follows upon the former; because men may falsely pretend

pretend to Inspiration, therefore we are not to believe every one that makes this pretence. For any man that hath but confidence enough, and conscience little enough, may pretend to come from God. And if we admit all pretences of this kind, we lie at the mercy of every crafty and confident man to be led by him into what delusions he pleaseth.

Thirdly, *Neither are we to reject all that pretend to come from God.* This is sufficiently implied in the Text; for when the *Apostle* says *believe not every Spirit*, he supposeth we are to believe some; and when he saith *try the Spirits whether they be of God*, he supposeth some to be of God, and that those which are so are to be believed. These three Observations are so plain that I need only to name them, to make way for the

*Fourth*, Which I principally designed to insist upon from these Words. And that is this, *That there is some way to discern mere pretenders to Inspiration, from those who are truly and Divinely inspired*; And this is necessarily implied in the *Apostles* bidding us to *try the Spirits whether they are of God*. For it were in vain to make any trial, if there be no way to discern between pretended and real Inspirations.

Now the handling of this will give occasion to two very material Enquiries, and usefull to be resolved.

I. *How we may discern between true and counterfeit Doctrines*; those which really are from God, and those which only pretend to be so.

II. *To whom this judgment of discerning doth appertain?*

I. *How we may discern between true and counterfeit Doctrines and Revelations*. For the clearing of this I shall lay down these following Propositions.

1. *That Reason is the faculty whereby Revelations are to be discerned*; or to use the phrase in the Text, it is that whereby we are to judge what Spirits are of God, and what not. For all Revelation from God supposeth us to be men, and to be indued with Reason; and therefore it does not create new Faculties in us, but propounds new Objects to that Faculty which was in us before. Whatever Doctrines God reveals to men are propounded to their Understandings, and by this Faculty we are to examine all Doctrines which pretend to be from God, and upon

on examination to judge whether there be reason to receive them as Divine, or to reject them as Impostures.

2. *All supernatural Revelation supposeth the truth of the Principles of Natural Religion.*

We must first be assured that there is a God, before we can know that he hath made any Revelation of himself; and we must know that his Words are true, otherwise there were no sufficient reason to believe the Revelations which he makes to us: and we must believe his Authority over us, and that he will reward our obedience to his Laws, and punish our breach of them; otherwise there would neither be sufficient obligation nor encouragement to Obedience. These and many other things are supposed to be true, and naturally known to us, antecedently to all supernatural Revelation; otherwise the Revelations of God would signifie nothing to us, nor be of any force with us.

3. *All Reasonings about Divine Revelations must necessarily be governed by the Principles of Natural Religion: that is,* by those apprehensions which men naturally have of the Divine perfections, and by the clear Notions of good and evil which are imprinted upon our Natures.

tures. Because we have no other way to judge what is worthy of God and credible to be revealed by him, and what not, but by the natural notions which we have of God and of his essential perfections: which, because we know him to be immutable, we have reason to believe he will never contradict. And by these Principles likewise, we are to interpret what God hath revealed; and when any doubt ariseth concerning the meaning of any divine Revelation (as that of the Holy Scriptures) we are to govern ourselves in the interpretation of it by what is most agreeable to those natural Notions which we have of God, and we have all the reason in the World to reject that sense which is contrary thereto. For instance, when God is represented in Scripture as having a humane shape, eyes, ears and hands, the Notions which men naturally have of the divine Nature and Perfections do sufficiently direct us to interpret these expressions in a sense worthy of God, and agreeable to his perfection: And therefore it is reasonable to understand them as rather spoken to our capacity, and in a Figure, than to be literally intended. And this will proportionably hold in many other cases.

4. Nothing ought to be received as a Revelation from God which plainly contradicts the Principles of Natural Religion, or overthrows the certainty of them. For instance, it were in vain to pretend a Revelation from God, *That there is no God*, because this is a contradiction in terms. So likewise to pretend a command from God, *That we are to hate and despise him*; because it is not credible that God should require any thing of Reasonable Creatures so unsuitable to their Natures, and to their Obligations to him: Besides, that such a Law as this does tacitly involve a contradiction; because upon such a supposition, to despise God would be to obey him; and yet to obey him is certainly to honour him. So that in this case to honour God, and to despise him, would be the same thing, and equal contempts of him. In like manner, it would be vain to pretend any Revelation from God, *That there is no life after this, nor rewards and punishments in another World*: because this is contrary to those natural apprehensions which have generally possessed mankind, and would take away the main force and sanction of the divine Laws. The like may be said concerning any pretended Revelation from God, which

which evidently contradicts those natural Notions which men have of good and evil; as, *That God should command, or allow Sedition and Rebellion, Perfidiousness and Perjury*; because the practise of these would be apparently destructive of the peace and happiness of Mankind, and would naturally bring confusion into the World: But *God is not the God of Confusion, but of Order*, which St. Paul appeals to as a Principle naturally known. Upon the same account nothing ought to be entertained as a Divine Revelation which overthrows the certainty of the Principles of natural Religion; because that would take away the certainty of Divine Revelation it self, which supposeth the truth of those Principles. For instance, whoever pretends any Revelation that brings the Providence of God into question, does by that very thing make such a Revelation questionable. For if God take no care of the World, have no concernment for humane affairs, why should we believe that he makes any Revelation of his Will to men? And by this Principle Moses will have false Prophets to be tried: *Deut. 13. 1. If there arise among you a Prophet, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake*



*spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that Prophet: And he gives the reason of this, ver. 5. Because he hath spoken unto you to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the Land of Egypt. Here is a case wherein a false Prophet is supposed to work a true Miracle to give credit to his Doctrine, (which in other cases the Scripture makes the sign of a true Prophet) but yet in this case he is to be rejected as an Impostor: Because the Doctrine he teacheth would draw men off from the worship of the true God who is naturally known, and had manifested himself to the people of *Israel* in so miraculous a manner, by bringing them out of the Land of *Egypt*. So that a Miracle is not enough to give credit to a Prophet who teacheth any thing contrary to that natural Notion which men have, That there is but one God, who only ought to be worshipped.*

*5. Nothing ought to be received as a Divine Doctrine and Revelation, without good evidence that it is so: that is, without some Argument sufficient to satisfy a prudent and considerate man. Now (supposing there be nothing in the matter*

ter of the Revelation that is evidently contrary to the Principles of Natural Religion, nor to any former Revelation which hath already received a greater and more solemn attestation from God) Miracles are owned by all Mankind to be a sufficient Testimony to any Person, or Doctrine, that are from God. This was the Testimony which God gave to *Moses* to satisfy the people of *Israel* that he had sent him; *Exod. 4. 1, 2. Moses said, They will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee.* Upon this God endues him with a power of Miracles, to be an evidence to them, *That they may believe that the God of their Fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* And all along in the *Old Testament*, when God sent his Prophets to make a new Revelation, or upon any strange and extraordinary message, he always gave credit to them by some Sign or Wonder which they foretold or wrought. And when he sent his *Son* into the World, he gave Testimony to him by innumerable great and unquestionable Miracles, more and greater than *Moses* and all the Prophets had wrought. And there was great reason for this; because  
our

our Saviour came not only to publish a new Religion to the World, but to put an end to that Religion which God had instituted before. And now that the Gospel hath had the confirmation of such Miracles as never were wrought upon any other occasion, no Evidence inferiour to this can in reason controul this Revelation, or give credit to any thing contrary to it. And therefore though the false Prophets and Antichrists, foretold by our Saviour, did really work Miracles, yet they were so inconsiderable in comparison of our Saviours, that they deserve no credit in opposition to that Revelation which had so clear a Testimony given to it from Heaven by Miracles, besides all other concurring Arguments to confirm it.

6. And Lastly, *No Argument is sufficient to prove a Doctrine or Revelation to be from God, which is not clearer and stronger than the Difficulties and Objections against it:* Because all Assent is grounded upon Evidence, and the strongest and clearest evidence always carries it: But where the evidence is equal on both sides, that can produce nothing but a suspense and doubt in the mind whether the thing be true or not. If *Moses* had not contuted  
*Pharaoh's*

Pharaoh's Magicians by working Miracles which they could not work, they might reasonably have disputed it with him who had been the true Prophet: But when he did works plainly above the power of their Magick and the Devil to do, then they submitted, and acknowledged that *there was the Finger of God*. So likewise, though a person work a Miracle (which ordinarily is a good evidence that he is sent by God) yet if the Doctrine he brings be plainly contrary to those natural Notions which we have of God, this is a better objection against the truth of his Doctrine than the other is a proof of it; as is plain in the case which *Moses* puts, *Deut.* 13. which I mentioned before.

Upon the same account no man can reasonably believe the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* to be revealed by God: because every man hath as great evidence that *Transubstantiation* is false, as any man can pretend to have that God hath revealed any such thing. Suppose *Transubstantiation* to be part of the Christian Doctrine, it must have the same confirmation with the whole, and that is *Miracles*: But of all Doctrines in the world it is peculiarly incapable of being proved by a Miracle. For if a Miracle were wrought

wrought for the proof of it, the very same assurance which a man hath of the truth of the Miracle, he hath of the fallshood of the Doctrine, *that is*, the clear evidence of his senses for both, For that there is a Miracle wrought to prove, *that what he sees in the Sacrament is not bread but the body of Christ*, he hath onely the evidence of his senses; and he hath the very same evidence to prove, *that what he sees in the Sacrament is not the body of Christ, but bread*. So that here ariseth a new controversie, whether a man should believe his senses giving testimony against the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, or bearing testimony to the Miracle which is wrought to confirm that Doctrine: For there is just the same evidence against the truth of the Doctrine, which there is for the truth of the Miracle. So that the Argument for Transubstantiation, and the Objection against it, do just ballance one another; and where the weights in both Scales are equal, it is impossible that the one should weigh down the other: and consequently Transubstantiation is not to be proved by a Miracle; for that would be, *to prove to a man by something that he sees, that he does not see what he sees*.

G

And

And thus I have endeavoured, as briefly and clearly as I could, to give satisfaction to the *first* Enquiry I propounded, *viz.* How we may discern between true and counterfeit Revelations and Doctrines : I proceed now to the

II.

*II. To whom this judgment of Discerning does appertain.* Whether to Christians in general, or to some particular Person, or Persons, authorised by God to judge for the rest of mankind, by whose judgment all men are concluded and bound up. And this is an enquiry of no small Importance ; because it is one of the most fundamental Points in difference between Us and the Church of *Rome*. And however in many particular Controversies, as concerning *Transubstantiation, the Communion in one kind, the Service of God in an unknown Tongue; the business of Indulgences, the Invocation of Saints, the Worship of Images,* they are not able to offer any thing that is fit to move a reasonable and considerate man ; yet in this Controversie, concerning the Judge of Controversies, they are not destitute of some specious appearance of Reason which deserves to be weighed and considered. Therefore that we may examine this matter

matter to the bottom, I shall do these three things.

1. Lay down some Cautions and Limitations whereby we may understand how far the generality of Christians are allowed to judge in matters of Religion.

2. I shall represent the grounds of this Principle.

3. Endeavour to satisfy the main Objection of our Adversaries against it: And likewise to shew, that there is no such reason and necessity for an universal infallible Judge as they pretend.

I. I shall lay down some Cautions and Limitations, by which we may understand how far the generality of Christians are allowed to judge in matters of Religion.

I.

*First*, Private Persons are onely to judge for themselves, and not to impose their Judgment upon others, as if they had any Authority over them. And this is reasonable, because if it were otherwise, a Man would deprive others of that liberty which he assumes to himself,



and which he can claim upon no other account, but because it belongs to others equally with himself.

*Secondly*, This liberty of judging is not so to be understood as to take away the necessity and use of Guides and Teachers in Religion. Nor can this be denied to be a reasonable limitation; because the knowledge of revealed Religion is not a thing born with us, nor ordinarily supernaturally infused into men; but is to be learned as other things are. And if it be to be learned, there must be some to teach and instruct others: And they that will learn, must be modest and humble; and in those things, of which they are no competent Judges, they must give credit to their Teachers, and trust their skill: For instance, every unlearned man is to take it upon the credit of those who are skilfull, That the Scriptures are truly and faithfully translated; and for the understanding of obscure Texts of Scripture, and more difficult points in Religion, he is to rely upon those, whose proper business and employment it is to apply themselves to the understanding of these things. For in these cases every man is not capable of judging himself, and therefore he must necessarily trust others:

thers: And in all other things he ought to be modest; and unless it be in plain matters, which every man can judge of, he ought rather to distrust himself than his Teacher.

And this respect may be given to a Teacher without either supposing him to be infallible, or making an absolute resignation of my judgment to him. A man may be a very able Teacher (suppose of the Mathematicks) and fit to have the respect which is due to a Teacher, though he be not infallible in those Sciences: and because Infallibility is not necessary to such a Teacher, it is neither necessary nor convenient that I should absolutely resign up my Judgment to him. For though I have reason to credit him, within the compass of his Art, in things which I do not know, I am not therefore bound to believe him in things plainly contrary to what I and all mankind do certainly know. For example, if upon pretence of his skill in Arithmetick, which I am learning of him, he should tell me, *That twice two do not make four, but five*; though I believed him to be the best Mathematician in the World, yet I cannot believe him in this thing: Nor is there reason I should; because I did not

G 3

come

come to learn this of him, but knew as much of *that* before as he or any man else could tell me. The case is the same in matters of Religion; in which there are some things so plain, and lie so level to all capacities, that every man is almost equally judge of them: As I shall have occasion farther to shew by and by.

*Thirdly*, Neither does this liberty of judging exempt men from a due submission and obedience to their Teachers and Governours. Every man is bound to obey the lawfull Commands of his Governours: and what by publick consent and Authority is determined and established, ought not to be gainsaid by private Persons, but upon very clear evidence of the falshood or unlawfulness of it. And this is every mans duty, for the maintaining of Order, and out of regard to the Peace and Unity of the Church; which is not to be violated upon every scruple and frivolous pretence: And when men are perverse and disobedient, Authority is Judge, and may restrain and punish them.

*Fourthly*, Nor do I so far extend this Liberty of judging in Religion, as to think every man fit to dispute the Controversies of Religion. A great part of  
 peo-

people are ignorant, and of so mean capacity, as not to be able to judge of the force of a very good Argument, much less of the issue of a long Dispute : and such persons ought not to engage in disputes of Religion ; but to beg God's direction, and to rely upon their Teachers ; and above all to live up to the plain dictates of natural Light, and the clear Commands of God's Word, and this will be their best security. And if the providence of God have placed them under such Guides as do seduce them into Error, their Ignorance is invincible, and God will not condemn them for it, so long as they sincerely endeavour to do the will of God so far as they know it. And this being the case of many, especially in the Church of *Rome*, where Ignorance is so industriously cherished, I have so much charity as to hope well concerning many of them : And seeing *that* Church teacheth and enjoins the people to worship Images, it is in some sense charitably done of them not to let them know the ~~second~~ Commandment, that they may not be guilty of sinning against so plain a Law. Having premised these Cautions, I proceed in the

II.

II. Place, To represent to you the grounds of this Principle of our Religion, viz. That we allow private persons to judge for themselves in matters of Religion.

First, Because many things in Religion, especially those which are most necessary to be believed and practised, are so plain that every man of ordinary capacity, after competent instruction in matters of Religion ( which is always to be supposed ) can as well judge of them for himself, as any man or company of men in the world can judge for him. Because in these he hath a plain Rule to go by, *Natural Light* and clear *Revelation of Scripture*. And this is no new Principle of the *Protestants*, but most expressly owned by the antient *Fathers*: *Whatever things are necessary, are plain, saith St. Chrysostom. All things are plainly contained in Scripture which concern faith and a good life, saith St. Austin.* And nothing can be more reasonable than that those things which are plain to every man should be left to every man's judgment. For every man can judge of what is plain; of evident Truth and Falshood, Vertue and Vice; of Doctrines and Laws plainly delivered in Scrip-

Scripture, if we believe any thing to be so, which it is next to madness to deny. I will refer it to no man's judgment upon earth to determine for me, *Whether there be a God or not? Whether Murder and Perjury be Sins?* Whether it be not plain in Scripture, That *Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, That *he became man*, and *died for us*, and *rose again*. So that there is no need of a Judge in these cases. Nor can I possibly believe any man to be so absolutely infallible, as not to call his infallibility into question, if he determines any thing contrary to what is plain and evident to all mankind. For if he should determine *that there is no God*, or *that he is not to be worshipped*, or *that he will not punish and reward men*, or, which is the case that Bellarmine puts, *that Vertue is Vice, and Vice Vertue*; he would hereby take away the very foundation of Religion; and how can I look upon him any longer as a Judge in matters of Religion, when there can be no such thing as Religion if he have judged and determined right.

*Secondly*, The Scripture plainly allows this liberty to *particular and private* Persons to judge for themselves. And for this I need go no farther than my *Text*, which bids

bids men *try the Spirits whether they be of God*. I do not think this is spoken onely to the Pope or a General Council, but to Christians in general; for to these the *Apostle* writes. Now if *St. John* had believed that God had constituted an infallible Judge in his Church, to whose Sentence and Determination all Christians are bound to submit, he ought in all reason to have referred Christians to him for the trial of Spirits, and not have left it to every man's private judgment to examine and to determine these things. But it seems *St. Paul* was likewise of the same mind; and though he was guided by an infallible Spirit, yet he did not expect that men should blindly submit to his Doctrine: Nay, so far is he from that, that he commends the *Bereans* for that very thing for which I dare say the Church of *Rome* would have check'd them most severely; namely, for *searching the Scriptures to see whether those things which the Apostles delivered were so or not*: This liberty *St. Paul* allowed; and though he was inspired by God, yet he treated those whom he taught like men. And indeed, it were a hard case that a necessity of believing divine Revelations, and rejecting Impostures, should be imposed upon



upon Christians; and yet the liberty of judging, whether a Doctrine be from God or not, should be taken away from them.

*Thirdly*, Our Adversaries themselves are forced to grant that which in effect is as much as we contend for. For though they deny a liberty of judging in *particular points* of Religion, yet they are forced to grant men a liberty of judging upon the *whole*. When they of the Church of Rome would perswade a *Jew*, or a *Heathen*, to become a Christian; or a *Heretic* (as they are pleased to call us) to come over to the Communion of their Church, and offer Arguments to induce them thereto; they do by this very thing, whether they will or no, make that man Judge *which is the true Church, and the true Religion*. Because it would be ridiculous to perswade a man to turn to their Religion, and to urge him with Reasons to do so, and yet to deny him the use of his own judgment whether their Reasons be sufficient to move him to make such a change. Now, as the *Apostle* reasons in another case, If men be fit to judge for themselves in so great and important a matter as the choice of their Religion, why should they be thought

*unworthy to judge in lesser matters?* They tell us indeed that a man may use his judgment in the choice of his Religion; but when he hath once chosen, he is then for ever to resign up his judgment to their Church: But what tolerable reason can any man give, why a man should be fit to judge upon the *whole*, and yet unfit to judge upon *particular* Points? especially if it be considered, that no man can make a discreet judgment of any Religion, before he hath examined the particular Doctrines of it, and made a judgment concerning *them*. Is it credible, that God should give a man judgment in the most fundamental and important matter of all, viz. *To discern the true Religion, and the true Church, from the false*; for no other end, but to enable him to chuse once for all to whom he should resign and enslave his judgment for ever? which is just as reasonable as if one should say, That God hath given a man eyes for no other end, but to look out once for all, and to pitch upon a discreet person to lead him about blindfold all the days of his life. I come now to the

III.

III. Thing I propounded, which is,  
*To answer the main Objection of our Adversaries*

*saries against this Principle; and likewise to shew that there is no such Reason and necessity for an universal Infallible Judge, as they pretend. Now their great Objection is this, If every man may judge for himself, there will be nothing but confusion in Religion, there will be no end of Controversies: so that an universal infallible Judge is necessary, and without this God had not made sufficient provision for the assurance of men's Faith, and for the peace and unity of his Church: Or, as it is expressed in the Canon Law, *aliter Dominus non videretur fuisse discretus, otherwise our Lord had not seem'd to be discreet.* How plausible soever this Objection may appear, I do not despair but if men will lay aside prejudice, and impartially consider things, to make it abundantly evident, that this ground is not sufficient to found an Infal-  
lible Judge upon. And therefore in answer to it, I desire these following particulars may be considered.*

*First,* That this which they say, rather proves what God should have done according to their fancy, than what he hath really and actually done. My *Text* expressly bids Christians to *try the Spirits*, which to any man's sense does imply  
that

that they may judge of these matters: But the Church of *England* says they may not; because if this liberty were permitted, God had not ordered things wisely, and for the best, for the peace and unity of his Church. But, as the *Apostle* says in another case, *What art thou, O man, that objectest against God?*

*Secondly*, If this Reasoning be good, we may as well conclude that there is an universal infallible Judge set over the whole World in all *Temporal* matters, to whose Authority all mankind is bound to submit. Because this is as necessary to the peace of the World, as the other is to the peace of the Church. And men surely are every whit as apt to be obstinate and perverse about matters of *Temporal* Right, as about matters of Faith. But it is evident in fact and experience that there is no such universal Judge, appointed by God over the whole World, to decide all Cases of temporal Right; and for want of him the World is fain to shift as well as it can. But now a very acute and scholastical man that would argue that God must needs have done whatever he fancies convenient for the World should be done, might by the very same way of Reasoning conclude the  
neces-

necessity of an universal infallible Judge in Civil matters, as well as in matters of Religion: And their *aliter Dominus non videretur fuisse discretus, otherwise God had not seem'd to be discreet*, is every whit as cogent, and as civil, in the one Case as the other.

*Thirdly*, There is no need of such a Judge, to assure men in matters of Religion; Because men be sufficiently certain without him. I hope it may be certain and clear enough *That there is a God*; and *That his Providence governs the World*; and *That there is another Life after this*, though neither Pope nor Council had ever declared any thing about these matters. And for Revealed Doctrines, we may be certain enough of all that is necessary, if it be true which the *Fathers* tell us, *That all things necessary are plainly revealed in the Holy Scriptures*.

*Fourthly*, An infallible Judge, if there were one, is no certain way to end Controversies, and to preserve the unity of the Church; unless it were likewise infallibly certain, *That there is such a Judge*, and, *Who he is*. For till men were sure of both these, there would still be a Controversie, whether there be an infallible Judge, and who he is. And if it be true  
which

which they tell us, *That without an infallible Judge Controversies cannot be ended*, then a Controversie concerning an infallible Judge can never be ended. And there are *two* Controversies actually on foot about an infallible Judge; One, *Whether there be an infallible Judge or not?* which is a Controversie between Us and the Church of *Rome*; and the other, *Who this infallible Judge is?* which is a Controversie among themselves, which could never yet be decided: And yet till it be decided, Infallibility, if they had it, would be of no use to them for the ending of Controversies.

*Fifthly*, There is no such absolute need, as is pretended, of determining all Controversies in Religion. If men would divest themselves of prejudice and interest, as they ought, in matters of Religion, the necessary things of Religion are plain enough, and men would generally agree well enough about them: But if men will suffer themselves to be byassed by these, they would not hearken to an infallible Judge, if there were one; or they would find out some way or other to call his Infallibility into question. And as for doubtful and lesser matters in Religion, charity and mutual forbearance among Christians

Christians would make the Church as peaceable and happy, as perhaps it was ever designed to be in this World, without absolute unity in Opinion.

*Sixthly and Lastly*, Whatever may be the inconveniences of mens judging for themselves in Religion, yet taking this Principle with the Cautions I have given, I doubt not to make it appear, that the inconveniences are far the least on that side. The present condition of humane Nature doth not admit of any constitution of things, whether in Religion or Civil matters, which is free from all kind of exception and inconvenience: That is the best state of things which is liable to the least and fewest. If men be modest, and humble, and willing to learn, God hath done that which is sufficient for the assurance of our Faith, and for the peace of his Church, without an infallible Judge: And if men will not be so, I cannot tell what would be sufficient. I am sure there were Heresies and Schisms in the *Apostles* Times, when Those who governed the Church were certainly guided by an infallible Spirit. God hath appointed Guides and Teachers for us in matters of Religion, and if we will be contented to be instructed by

H

them



them in those necessary Articles and Duties of Religion, which are plainly contained in Scripture ; and to be counselled and directed by them in things that are more doubtfull and difficult, I do not see why we might not do well enough without any infallible Judge or Guide.

But still it will be said, who shall judge what things are plain and what doubtfull ? The answer to this, in my opinion, is not difficult. For if there be any thing plain in Religion, every man that hath been duly instructed in the Principles of Religion can judge of it, or else it is not plain. But there are some things in Religion so very plain, that no Guide or Judge can in reason claim that Authority over men, as to oblige them to believe or do the contrary ; no, though he pretend to Infallibility ; no, though he were an *Apostle*, though he were an *Angel from heaven*. *S. Paul* puts the case so high, *Gal. i. 8.* *Though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than what you have received, let him be accursed :* which plainly supposeth that Christians may and can judge when Doctrines are contrary to the Gospel. What ? not believe an *Apostle*, nor an *Angel from heaven*, if he should teach a  
ny

ny thing evidently contrary to the plain Doctrine of the Gospel? If he should determine Vertue to be Vice, and Vice to be Vertue? No; not an Apostle, nor an Angel; because such a Doctrine as this would confound and overturn all things in Religion. And yet *Bellarmino* puts this very Case, and says, If the Pope should so determine, we were bound to believe him, unless we would sin against Conscience.

I will conclude this Discourse by putting a very plain and familiar Case; by which it will appear what credit and authority is fit to be given to a Guide, and what not. Suppose I came a Stranger into *England*, and landing at *Dover* took a Guide there to conduct me in my way to *York*, which I knew before by the *Mapp* to lie *North* of *Dover*: Having committed my self to him, if he lead me for two or three days together out of any plain Road, and many times over hedge and ditch, I cannot but think it strange, that in a civil and well-inhabited Country there should be no High-ways from one part of it to another; Yet thus far I submit to him, though not without some regret and impatience. But then if after this, for two or three days more

he lead me directly *South*, and with my face full upon the Sun at Noon-day, and at last bring me back again to *Dover Pere*; and still bids me follow him: Then certainly no modesty do's oblige a man not to dispute with his Guide, and to tell him, surely that can be no way because it is *Sea*. Now though he set never so bold a face upon the matter, and tell me with all the gravity and authority in the world, That it is not *the Sea* but *dry Land* under the *species* and *appearance of Water*; and that whatever my eyes tell me, having once committed my self to his guidance, I must not trust my own senses in the case; it being one of the most dangerous sorts of Infidelity for a man to believe his own eyes rather than his *faithfull* and *infallible Guide*: All this moves me not; but I begin to expostulate roundly with him, and to let him understand that if I must not believe what I see, he is like to be of no farther use to me; because I shall not be able, at this rate, to know whether I have a Guide, and whether I follow him or not. In short, I tell him plainly, that when I took him for my Guide, I did not take him to tell me the difference between *North* and *South*, between a *Hedge* and

and a *High-way*, between *Sea* and *dry Land*; all this I knew before, as well as he or any man else could tell me; but I took him to conduct and direct me the nearest way to *Tork*: And therefore after all his impertinent talk; after all his Motives of Credibility to perswade me to believe him, and all his confident *sayings*, which he gravely calls *Demonstrations*, I stand stilly upon the shore, and leave my learned and reverend Guide to take his own course, and to dispose of himself as he pleaseth; but firmly resolved not to follow him. And is any man to be blamed that breaks with his Guide upon these Terms?

And this is truly the Case, when a man commits himself to the Guidance of any person or Church: If by virtue of this Authority, they will needs perswade me out of my senses, and not to believe *what I see* but *what they say*; that *Vertue is Vice*, and *Vice Vertue*, if they declare them to be so: And that because they say they are infallible, I am to receive all their Dictates for Oracles, though never so evidently false and absurd in the Judgment of all Mankind: In this case there is no way to be rid of these unreasonable People, but to desire of them, since one kind-

ness deserves another and all Contradictions are alike easie to be believed, that *they* would be pleased to believe that Infidelity is Faith, and that when I absolutely renounce their Authority I do yield a most perfect submission and obedience to it.

Upon the whole matter, all the Revelations of God, as well as the Laws of men, go upon this presumption that men are not stark fools; but that they will consider their Interest and have some regard to the great concernment of their eternal salvation. And this is as much to secure men from mistake in matters of Belief, as God hath afforded to keep men from sin in matters of Practice. He hath made no effectual and infallible provision that men shall not sin; and yet it would puzzle any man to give a good Reason, why God should take more care to secure men against Errors in Belief, than against sin and wickedness in their Lives.

I shall now only draw *three* or *four* Inferences from this Discourse which I have made, and so conclude.

1. *That it is every mans Duty, who hath ability and capacity for it, to endeavour to understand the grounds of his Religion.* For  
to

to try Doctrines is to inquire into the grounds and reasons of them: which the better any man understands, the more firmly he will be established in the Truth, and be the more resolute in the day of Trial, and the better able to withstand the Arts and assaults of cunning Adversaries, and the fierce storms of Persecution. And, on the contrary, that man will soon be moved from his steadfastness who never examined the grounds and Reasons of his belief. When it comes to the Trial, he that hath but little to say for his Religion will probably neither do nor suffer much for it.

2. *That all Doctrines are vehemently to be suspected: which decline Trial, and are so loth to be brought into the light; which will not endure a fair Examination, but magisterially require an implicate Faith: Whereas Truth is bold and full of courage, and loves to appear openly; and is so secure and confident of her own strength, as to offer her self to the severest Trial and Examination. But to deny all liberty of Enquiry and Judgment in matters of Religion is the greatest injury and disparagement to Truth that can be, and a tacite acknowledgement that she lies under some disadvantage, and that*



there is less to be said for her than for Error.

I have often wonder'd why the People in the Church of *Rome* do not suspect their Teachers and Guides to have some ill design upon them, when they do so industriously debar them of the means of Knowledge, and are so very loth to let them understand what it is that we have to say against their Religion. For can any thing in the world be more suspicious than to perswade men to put out their eyes, upon promise that they will help them to a much better and more faithfull Guide? If any Chrch, any Profession of men, be unwilling their Doctrines should be exposed to Trial, it is a certain sign they know something by them that is faulty, and which will not endure the light. This is the account which our Saviour gives us in a like case, It was because mens deeds were evil that they loved darkness rather than light. For every one that doth evil hateth the light; neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: But he that doth the truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.

3. Since



3. Since Reason and Christianity allow this liberty to private persons to judge for themselves in matters of Religion, we should use this privilege with much modesty and humility, with great submission and deference to our Spiritual Rulers and Guides, whom God hath appointed in his Church. And there is very great need of this Caution, since by experience we find this liberty so much abused by many to the nourishing of Pride and Self-conceit, of Division and Faction; and those who are least able to judge, to be frequently the most forward and confident, the most peremptory and perverse: and instead of demeaning themselves with the submission of Learners, to assume to themselves the authority of Judges, even in the most doubtfull and disputable matters.

The Tyranny of the *Roman* Church over the Minds and Consciences of men is not to be justified upon any account; but nothing puts so plausible a colour upon it, as the ill use that is too frequently made of this natural Privilege of mens judging for themselves in a matter of so infinite concernment, as that of their eternal happiness. But then it is to be consider'd, that the proper remedy in this Case,

Case, is not to deprive men of this Privilege, but to use the best means to prevent the abuse of it. For though the *inconveniences* arising from the ill use of it may be very great, yet the *mischiefs* on the other hand is intolerable. Religion it self is liable to be abused to very bad purposes, and frequently is so; but it is not therefore best that there should be no Religion: And yet this Objection, if it be of any force and be pursued home, is every whit as strong against Religion it self, as against mens liberty of judging in matters of Religion. Nay I add farther, that no man can judiciously embrace the true Religion, unless he be permitted to judge, whether that which he embraces be the true Religion or not.

4. When upon due Trial and Examination we are well-settled and established in our Religion, *let us hold fast the profession of our Faith without wavering*; and not be like Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, through the sleight of men; and the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. And above all, let us resolve to live according to the excellent Rules and Precepts of our holy Religion; let us heartily obey that

Do-

Doctrine which we profess to believe. We, who enjoy the *Protestant* Religion, have all the means and advantages of understanding the Will of God, free liberty, and full scope of enquiring into it, and informing our selves concerning it: We have all the opportunities we can wish of coming to the knowledge of our Duty: The Oracles of God lie open to us, and his Law is continually before our eyes; *his word is nigh unto us, in our mouths, and in our hearts;* (that is, we may read it and meditate upon it) *that we may do it: The Key of Knowledge* is put into our hands, so that if we do not enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, it is we our selves that shut our selves out. And where there is nothing to hinder us from the knowledge of our Duty, there certainly nothing can excuse us from the practice of it. For the End of all knowledge is to direct men in their duty, and effectually to engage them to the performance of it: The great business of Religion is, *to make men truly good, and to teach them to live well.* And if Religion have not this effect, it matters not of what Church any man lists and enters himself; for most certainly, *A bad man can be saved in none.* Though a man know

know the right way to Heaven never so well, and be entered into it, yet if he will not walk therein, he shall never come thither: Nay, it will be an aggravation of this man's unhappiness, that he was lost in the way to Heaven, and perished in the very Road to Salvation. But if we will in good earnest apply ourselves to the practice of Religion, and the obedience of God's holy Laws, his Grace will never be wanting to us to so good a purpose.

I have not time to recommend Religion to you at large, with all its advantages. I will comprise what I have to say in a few words, and mind them at your peril. Let that which is our great concernment be our great care, *To know the Truth and to do it, To fear God and keep his Commandments.* Considering the Reasonableness and the Reward of Piety and Vertue, nothing can be wiser? and considering the mighty assistance of God's Grace, which he is ready to afford to us, and the unspeakable satisfaction and delight which is to be had in the doing of our duty, nothing can be easier: Nothing will give us that pleasure, while we live; nothing can minister that true and solid comfort to us, when we come to die; There is proba-

probably no such way for a man to be happy in this World; to be sure, there is no way but this to escape the intolerable and endless miseries of another World.

*Now God grant that we may all know, and do, in this our-day, the things that belong to our peace, for his Mercies sake in Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glory now and for ever. Amen.*

---

A

---

probably no such way for a man to be  
happy in this World, as being in the  
no way but this to escape the intolerable  
and cruel miseries of another World.

Now God grant that we may all want  
and do on this our day the things that  
belong to our peace for his blessed sake  
in Jesus Christ: To whom with the Father  
and the Holy Ghost be all Honour and Glo-  
ry now and for ever. Amen.

S

At  
L  
T  
I

---

A  
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

At the Affises held at  
K I N G S T O N upon  
T H A M E S, *July 21.*  
1681.

---



S E R M O N

PREACHED

At the Altar held at  
KINGSTON upon  
THAMES. July 21.  
1681.

R  
F  
S  
S  
V  
plea  
ing  
of n  
yet  
ly i  
fire,  
Arg  
live  
the  
thin  
of O  
taki

## TO THE

Right Worshipfull and my honoured Friend

JOSEPH REEVE, Esq;

High Sherif of the County of

SURREY.

STR,

**W**Hen I had perform'd the  
 Service which you were  
 pleas'd to call me to in the preach-  
 ing of this Sermon, I had no thoughts  
 of making it more publique. And  
 yet in this also I was the more easi-  
 ly induced to comply with your de-  
 sire, because of the suitableness of the  
 Argument to the Age in which we  
 live: Wherein as men have run into  
 the wildest extremities in other  
 things, so particularly in the matter  
 of Oaths; some making conscience of  
 taking any Oaths at all, and too  
 I many

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

many none at all of breaking them.

To convince the great mistake of the one extreme, and to check the growing evil and mischief of the other, is the chief design of this Discourse. To which I shall be very glad if by God's blessing it may prove any-wise serviceable. I am

Sir,

Your very faithfull and

humble Servant,

Jo. Tillotson.

The

The Lawfulness,

A N D

Obligation of Oaths.

---

A

S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

Affises held at Kingston upon Thames,

July 21. 1681.

---

HEB. VI. 16.

*And an Oath for confirmation is to  
them an end of all strife.*

**T**H E Necessity of Religion to the  
support of humane Society in no-  
thing appears more evidently than in this,

I 2

That

That the obligation of an Oath, which is so necessary for the maintenance of peace and justice among men, depends wholly upon the sense and belief of a Deity. For no reason can be imagined why any man that doth not believe a God, should make the least conscience of an Oath; which is nothing else but a solemn appeal to God as a witness of the truth of what we say. So that whoever promotes Atheism and Infidelity doth the most destructive thing imaginable to humane Society, because he takes away the reverence and obligation of Oaths: And whenever that is generally cast off, humane Society must disband, and all things run into disorder. The just sense whereof made *David* cry out to God with so much earnestness, as if the World had been cracking, and the frame of it ready to break in pieces, *Psal. 12. Help, Lord, for the righteous man ceaseth, and the faithfull fail from among the children of men:* Intimating, That when Faith fails from among men, nothing but a particular and immediate interpolation of the Divine providence can preserve the World from falling into confusion. And our Blessed Saviour gives this as a sign of the end of the World, and the approaching dissolution

tion of all things, when faith and truth shall hardly be found among men, *Luke 18. 8. When the Son of man comes, shall he find Faith on the earth?* This state of things doth loudly call for his coming to destroy the World, which is even ready to dissolve and fall in pieces of it self when these bands and pillars of humane Society do break and fail. And surely never in any age was this sign of the coming of the Son of man more glaring and terrible than in this degenerate Age wherein we live, when almost all sorts of men seem to have broke loose from all obligations to faith and truth.

And therefore I do not know any Argument more proper and usefull to be treated of upon this Occasion than of the Nature and Obligation of an *Oath*, which is the utmost security that one man can give to another of the truth of what he says; the strongest tye of fidelity, the surest ground of Judicial proceedings, and the most firm and sacred bond that can be laid upon all that are concerned in the administration of publick Justice; upon *Judge*, and *Jury*, and *Witnesses*.

And for this reason I have pitched upon these Words; In which the Apostle declares to us the great use and necessity

of Oaths among men ; *An Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* He had said before, that for our greater assurance and comfort God hath confirmed his promises to us by an Oath ; condescending herein to deal with us after the manner of men , who when they would give credit to a doubtful matter confirm what they say by an Oath. And generally when any doubt or controversy ariseth between Parties concerning a matter of fact, one side affirming and the other denying, an end is put to this contest by an Oath ; *An Oath for confirmation being to them an end of all strife : An Oath for confirmation, is Resolution,* for the greater assurance and establishment of a thing : Not that an Oath is always a certain and infallible decision of things according to truth and right , but that this is the utmost credit that we can give to any thing, and the last resort of truth and confidence among men : After this we can go no farther, for if the Religion of an Oath will not oblige men to speak truth nothing will. This is the utmost security that men can give, and must therefore be the final decision of all contests ; *An Oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*

Now





hath relation to God; in all these cases a man doth virtually call God to witness; and in so doing he doth by consequence invoke him as a Judge and an Avenger, in case what he swears be not true: And if this be exprest, the Oath is a formal Imprecation; but whether it be, or not, a curse upon our selves is always implied in case of perjury.

There are *two* sorts of Oaths, *Affertory*, and *Promissory*. An *assertory* oath is when a man affirms or denies upon oath a matter of fact, past, or present: when he swears that a thing was, or is so, or not so. A *promissory* oath is a promise confirmed by an oath, which always respects something that is future: And if the promise be made directly and immediately to *God*, then it is called a *Vow*; if to *men*, an *Oath*. I proceed to the

- II. II. Thing, which is to shew the great use and even necessity of Oaths, in many cases: Which is so great, that humane Society can very hardly, if at all, subsist long without them. Government would many times be very insecure, and for the faithfull discharge of Offices of great trust, in which the welfare of the Publick is nearly concerned, it is not possible

to

to find any security equal to that of an Oath; because the obligation of that reacheth to the most secret and hidden practices of men, and takes hold of them in many cases where the penalty of no humane Law can have any awe or force upon them: And especially, it is (as the *Civil Law* expresseth it) *maximum expediendarum litium remedium*, the best means of ending controversies: And where mens estates or lives are concerned, no evidence but what is assured by an Oath will be thought sufficient to decide the matter, so as to give full and general satisfaction to mankind. For in matters of so great concernment, when men have all the assurance that can be had, and not till then, they are contented to sit down and rest satisfied with it. And among all Nations an Oath hath always been thought the only peremptory and satisfactory way of deciding such controversies.

III. The *third* thing I proposed was to vindicate the *lawfulness* of Oaths, where they are necessary. And it is a very strong inducement to believe the lawfulness of them, that the unavoidable condition of humane affairs hath made them

sq

III.

so necessary. The Apostle takes it for granted that an Oath is not only of great use in humane affairs, but in many cases of great necessity, to confirm a doubtful thing, and to put an end to controversies which cannot otherwise be decided to the satisfaction of the Parties contending; *An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.* And indeed it is hardly imaginable that God should not have left that lawfull, which is so evidently necessary to the peace and security of Mankind.

But because there is a *Señ*, sprung up in our memory, which hath called in question the lawfulness of all Oaths, to the great mischief and disturbance of humane Society, I shall endeavour to search this matter to the bottom, and to manifest how unreasonable and groundless this Opinion is. And to this end, I shall

*First* prove the lawfulness of Oaths from the authority of this Text, and from the reasons plainly contained, or strongly implied in it.

*Secondly*, I shall shew the weakness and insufficiency of the grounds of the contrary Opinion; whether from Reason, or from Scripture, which last they principally rely upon; and if it could be made

made out from thence would determine the case.

1. I shall prove the lawfulness of Oaths from the authority of this Text, and the reasons plainly contained, or strongly implied in it. Because the Apostle doth not only speak of the use of Oaths among men without any manner of censure and reproof, but as a commendable custome and practice, and in many cases necessary, for the confirmation of doubtful matters, and in order to the final decision of Controversies and Differences among men. For

*First.* He speaks of it as the general practice of Mankind, to confirm things by an oath in order to the ending of differences. And indeed there is nothing that hath more universally obtained in all Ages and Nations of the World: than which there is not a more certain indication that a thing is agreeable to the Law of Nature and the best Reason of Mankind. And that this was no degenerate practice of Mankind, like that of Idolatry, is from hence evident; that when God separated a People to himself, it was practised among them, by the holy Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and was afterwards not only allowed, but

but in many Cases commanded by the Law of *Moses*; which had it been a thing evil in it self and forbidden by the Law of Nature, would not have been done.

*Secondly.* Another undeniable Argument from the Text of the lawfulness of Oaths is, that God himself, in condescension to the Custome of men who use to confirm and give credit to what they say by an Oath, is represented by the Apostle as confirming his promise to us by an Oath, vers. 13. *When God made the promise to Abraham, because he could swear by none greater, he swears by himself. For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: which he certainly would not have done, had an oath been unlawful in it self.* For that had been to comply with men in an evil practice, and by his own example to give countenance to it in the highest manner: But though God condescend to represent himself to us after the manner of men, he never does it in any thing that is in its own nature evil and sinfull.

*Thirdly.*



*Thirdly*, From the great Usefulness of Oaths in humane affairs, to give credit and confirmation to our word, and to put an end to Contestations. Now that which serves to such excellent purposes, and is so convenient for humane society, and for mutual security and confidence among men, ought not easily to be presumed unlawfull, till it be plainly proved to be so. And if we consider the nature of an oath, and every thing belonging to it, there is nothing that hath the least appearance of evil in it. There is surely no evil in it, as it is an act of Religion; nor as it is an Appeal to God as a witness and avenger in case we swear falsely; nor as it is a confirmation of a doubtful matter; nor as it puts an end to strife and controversy. And these are all the essential ingredients of an Oath, and the ends of it; and they are all so good, that they rather commend it, than give the least colour of ground to condemn it. I proceed in the

*Second place*, to shew the weakness and insufficiency of the grounds of the contrary opinion; whether from *Reason*, or from *Scripture*.

*First, from Reason.* They say the necessity of an Oath is occasioned by the want of truth and fidelity among men.

And



And that every man ought to demean himself with that faithfulness and integrity as may give credit and confirmation to his word; and then Oaths will be needless. This pretence will be fully answered, if we consider these ~~two~~ things.

1. That in matters of great importance no other obligation, besides that of an oath, hath been thought sufficient amongst the best and wisest of men to assure their fidelity to one another. *Even the best men* (to use the words of a great Author) *have not trusted the best men without it.* As we see in very remarkable instances, where Oaths have passed between those who might be thought to have the greatest confidence in one another: As between *Abraham* and his old faithfull servant *Eliezer*, concerning the choice of a Wife for his Son: Between Father and Son, *Jacob* and *Joseph*, concerning the burial of his Father in the Land of *Canaan*: Between two of the dearest and most intimate Friends, *David* and *Jonathan*, to assure their friendship to one another; and it had its effect long after *Jonathan's* death in the saving of *Mephibosheth*, when reason of State and the security of his Throne seem'd to move *David* strongly to the contrary; for it is expressly

expressly said, 2 Sam. 21. 7. that David spared Mephibosheth, Jonathan's Son, because of the oath of the Lord that was between them; implying, that had it not been for his Oath, other considerations might probably have prevail'd with him to have permitted him to have been cut off with the rest of Saul's Children.

2. This Reason, which is alledged against Oaths among men, is much stronger against God's confirming his promises to us by an Oath. For he who is truth it self is surely of all other most to be credited upon his bare word, and his oath needless to give confirmation to it; and yet he condescends to add his oath to his word; and therefore that reason is evidently of no force.

Secondly, from Scripture. Our Saviour seems altogether to forbid swearing in any case, *Matth. 5. 33, 34. Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thy self: but I say unto you swear not at all; neither by heaven, &c. But let your communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.* And this Law St. James recites, *chap. 5. vers. 12.* as that which Christians ought to have a very particular and principal regard to;

*above*

*above all things my Brethren swear not:* And he makes the breach of this Law a damning sin, *lest ye fall into condemnation.* But the authority of our Saviour alone is sufficient, and therefore I shall only consider that Text.

And, because here lies the main strength of this opinion of the unlawfulness of Oaths, it is very fit that this Text be fully consider'd; and that it be made very evident, that it was not our Saviour's meaning by this prohibition wholly to forbid the use of Oaths.

But before I enter upon this matter, I will readily grant, that there is scarce any Error whatsoever that hath a more plausible colour from Scripture, than this; which makes the case of those who are seduced into it the more pityable. But then it ought to be consider'd, how much this Doctrine of the unlawfulness of oaths reflects upon the Christian Religion: since it is so evidently prejudicial both to humane Society in general, and particularly to those persons that entertain it: neither of which ought rashly to be supposed and taken for granted, concerning any Law delivered by our Saviour: Because upon these terms it will be very hard for us to vindicate the divine wisdom

dom of our Saviour's Doctrine, and the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion. Of the inconvenience of this Doctrine to humane Society, I have spoken already. But besides this, it is very prejudicial to them that hold it. It renders them suspected to Government, and in many cases incapable of the common benefits of Justice and other privileges of humane Society, and exposeth them to great penalties as the constitution of all Laws and Governments at present is, and it is not easie to imagine how they should be otherwise. And which is very considerable in this matter, it sets those who refuse Oaths upon very unequal terms with the rest of Mankind, if where the estates and lives of men are equally concern'd, their bare testimonies shall be admitted without an Oath, and others shall be obliged to speak upon Oath: Nothing being more certain in experience, than that many men will lie for their interest when they will not be perjured, God having planted in the natural Consciences of men a secret dread of perjury above most other sins. And this inconvenience is so great, as to render those who refuse oaths in all cases almost intolerable to humane Society. I speak

K

not

not this either to bring them into trouble, or to perswade them to measure truth by their interest: but on the other hand I must needs say, that it is no Argument either of a wise or good man to take up any opinion, especially such a one as is greatly to his prejudice, upon slight grounds. And this very consideration, that it is so much to their inconvenience, may justly move them to be very careful in the examination of it.

This being premis'd, I come now to explain this Prohibition of our Saviour; and to this purpose, I desire these *three* things may be well consider'd.

*First*, That several circumstances of these words of our Saviour do manifestly shew that they ought to be interpreted in a limited sense, as only forbidding swearing in common conversation; *needless* and *heedless* oaths (as one expresseth it) and in general all voluntary swearing, unless upon some great and weighty cause, in which the glory of God and the good of the souls of Men is concerned. For that in such cases a voluntary oath may be lawfull, I am induced to believe from the example of *St. Paul*, who useth it more than once upon such occasions; of which I shall hereafter give particular Instances.

And

And this was the sense of Wise men among the *Heathen*, that men should not swear but upon necessity and great occasion. Thus *Eusebius*, the Philosopher in *Stobæus*, counsels men. Some (says he) advise men to be carefull to swear the truth; but I advise principally that men do not easily swear at all, that is, not upon any slight but only upon weighty occasions; To the same purpose *Epictetus*, Shun oaths wholly, if it be possible; if not, however as much as thou canst: And so likewise *Simplicius* in his Comment upon him, We ought wholly to shun swearing, except upon occasions of great necessity: And *Quintilian* among the Romans, *In totum jurare, nisi ubi necesse est, gravi viro parum convenit*; To swear at all, except where it is necessary, do's not well suit with a wise man.

And, that this Prohibition of our Saviour's ought to be understood of oaths in ordinary conversation, appears from the opposition which our Saviour makes, *Swear not at all; but let your communication be yea, yea*; That is, in your ordinary commerce and affairs do not interpose oaths, but say and do. And this is very much confirmed, in that our Saviour do's not under this general Prohibition, in-



stance in such oaths as are expressly by the name of God: The reason whereof is this; The *Jews* thought it unlawfull in ordinary communication to swear expressly by the name of God, but lawfull to swear by the Creatures, as by *Heaven* and *Earth*, &c. So that our Saviour's meaning is as if he had said, You think you may swear in common conversation, provided you do not swear by the name of God; but I say unto you, let your communication be without oaths of any kind: you shall not so much as swear by *heaven* or by *earth*, because God is virtually invoked in every oath. And unless we suppose this to be our Saviour's meaning, I do not see what good Reason can be given why our Saviour should only forbid them to swear by the Creatures, and not much rather by the Name of God; such oaths being surely of all others most to be avoided, as being the most direct abuse and profanation of the Name of God.

*Secondly*, It is very considerable to the explaining of this Prohibition, that there are the like general expressions in other *Jewish* Authours concerning this very matter, which yet must of necessity be thus limited. *Maimonides*, from the ancient



cient *Rabbies*, gives this Rule, that *it is best not to swear at all*. And *Philo* useth almost the same words. And *Rabbi Jonathan* comes very near our Saviour's expression, when he says *The just man will not swear at all; not so much as by the common Names of God, nor by his Attributes, nor by his Works, as by Heaven, or the Angels, or the Law*. Now it is not imaginable, that these learned *Jews* should condemn Oaths in all cases, when the Law of *Moses* did in many cases expressly require them. And therefore they are to be understood of voluntary oaths in ordinary conversation. And that the *Jews* meant this by not swearing at all, seems to be very plain from a passage in *Josephus*, who says that the *Seet* of the *Essenes* forbad their Disciples to swear at all; and yet he tells us at the same time, that they who were admitted into that *Seet* took an oath to observe the Laws and Rules of it. So that they who forbad to swear at all, allowed of Oaths imposed by the Authority of Superiours.

*Thirdly*, Which will peremptorily decide this matter, this Prohibition of our Saviour's cannot be understood to forbid all Oaths, without a plain contradiction to the undoubted practice of the primitive

tive Christians, and of the Apostles, and even of our Lord himself. *Origen* and *Tertullian* tells us, that the Christians refused to swear by the Emperour's *Genius*; not because it was an Oath, but because they thought it to be Idolatrous; But the same *Tertullian* says, that the Christians were willing to swear *per salutem Imperatoris, by the health and safety of the Emperour.* *Athanasius*, being accused to *Constantius*, purged himself by oath, and desired that his Accuser might be put to his Oath *sub attestazione veritatis, by calling the truth to witness*; by which form (says he) we Christians are wont to swear. But which is more than this, *St. Paul*, upon weighty occasions, do's several times in his *Epistles* call God to witness for the truth of what he says; which is the very formality of an Oath. *God is my witness, Rom. 1. 9. As God is true, our word was not yea and nay, 2 Cor. 1. 18. and v. 23. I call God for a record upon my Soul. Before God I lye not, Gal. 1. 20. God is my record, Philip. 1. 8. God is my witness, 1 Thess. 2. 5.* These are all unquestionable oaths; which we cannot imagine *St. Paul* would have used, had they been directly contrary to our Saviour's Law. And whereas some defend this

this upon account of his extraordinary Inspiration, I cannot possibly see how this mends the matter. For certainly it is very inconvenient to say that they who were to teach the Precepts of Christ to others, did themselves break them by Inspiration.

But I go yet farther, and shall urge an example beyond all exception.

Our Saviour himself (who surely would not be the first example of breaking his own Laws) did not refuse to answer upon Oath, being called thereto at his Trial. So we find *Matth. 26. 63.* *The high Priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God;* that is, he required him to answer this question upon Oath. For among the Jews, the form of giving an oath to witnesses and others was not by tendering a formal oath to them, as the custome is among us, but by adjuring them, that is, requiring them to answer upon oath: As is plain from *Levit. 5. 1.* *If a man hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness whether he hath seen or known of such a thing, if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his Iniquity. If he have heard the voice of swearing, that is, if being adju-*

red or demanded to answer upon oath concerning what he hath seen or heard, he do not utter the truth, he is perjured. Now to this adjuration of the high Priest our Saviour answered, *thou hast said* : which words are not an avoiding to answer (as some have thought) but a direct answer, as if he had said *it is as thou sayest, it is even so, I am the Son of God*. For upon this answer the high Priest said, *he hath spoken blasphemy*. But to put the matter beyond all doubt St. Mark tells us, *Mark 14. 61.* that he being asked by the high Priest, *Art thou the Christ the Son of the Blessed ? He answered, I am.* So that unless we will interpret our Saviour's Doctrine contrary to his own practice we cannot understand him to forbid all Oaths, and consequently they are not unlawfull.

I have been the longer upon this, that I might give clear satisfaction in this matter to those that are willing to receive it.

As for the *Ceremonies* in use amongus in the taking of Oaths, it is no just Exception against them, that they are not found in Scripture. For this was always matter of Liberty ; and several Nations have used several Rites and Ceremonies in their Oaths. It was the custome of the

Grav

Græcians, to swear laying their hands upon the Altar, *quod sanctissimum jusjurandum est habitum*, (saith A. Gellius) which was looked upon as the most sacred form of Swearing. The Romans were wont *Jovem Lapidem jurare*; that is, he that swore by Jupiter held a Flint-stone in his hand, and flung it violently from him with these words, *Si sciens fallo ita me Jupiter bonis omnibus ejiciat ut ego hunc Lapidem*; If I knowingly falsify, God so throw me out of all my possessions as I do this stone.

In Scripture there are two Ceremonies mentioned of Swearing. One, of putting the hand under the Thigh of him to whom the Oath was made. Thus Eliezer swore to Abraham, Gen. 24. and Joseph to Jacob, Gen. 47. The other was by lifting up the hand to heaven: Thus Abraham expresseth the manner of an Oath, Gen. 14. 22. *I have lift up my hand to the most high God*. And thus God condescending to the manner of men, expresseth himself, Deut. 32. 40. *If I lift up my hand to heaven, and swear*. In allusion to this custome the Psalmist describes the Perjured person, Psal. 144. 8. *Whose mouth speaketh vanity; and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood*. And there is not

not the least intimation in Scripture that either of these Ceremonies were prescribed and appointed by God, but voluntarily instituted and taken up by men. And thus among us the Ceremony of Swearing is *by laying the hand on the holy Gospel, and kissing the Book*; which is both very solemn and significant. And this is the reason why this solemn kind of Oath is called a *corporal* Oath, and was anciently so called; because the sign or ceremony of it is performed by some part of the *Body*. And this Solemnity is an aggravation of the Perjury, because it makes it both more deliberate, and more scandalous.

- I shall speak but briefly to the
- IV. And last particular, *viz.* the sacred obligation of an Oath: because it is a solemn appeal to God as a witness of the truth of what we say: To God, I say, from whose piercing and all-seeing eye, from whose perfect and infinite knowledge nothing is or can be hid: So that there is not a thought in our heart but he sees it, nor a word in our tongue but he discerns the truth or falsehood of it. Whenever we swear we appeal to his knowledge, and refer our selves to his just judgment who is the powerfull Patron and Protector



Cour of Right, and the Almighty Judge  
 and avenger of all falshood and unrighte-  
 ousness. So that it is not possible for  
 men to lay a more sacred and solemn  
 obligation upon their Consciences, than  
 by the Religion of an Oath. *Moses* very  
 well expresth it, by *binding our souls*  
*with a bond.* Numb. 30. 2. *If a man swear*  
*an oath, to bind his soul with a bond;* in-  
 timating that he that swears lays the  
 strongest obligation upon himself, and  
 puts his Soul in pawn for the truth of  
 what he says. And this obligation no  
 man can violate, but at the utmost peril  
 of the judgment and vengeance of God.  
 For every Oath implies a Curse upon our  
 selves in case of Perjury, as *Plutarch* ob-  
 serves. And this was always the sense of  
 Mankind concerning the obligation of  
 Oaths. *Nallum vinculum ad astringendam*  
*fidem majores nostri jurejurando arctius esse*  
*vulnerunt,* saith *Tully;* Our fore-fathers  
 had no stricter bond whereby to oblige the  
 faith of men to one another, than that of an  
 Oath. To the same purpose is that in the  
 Comedian, *Aliud si scirem, quæ firmare me-*  
*am apud vos possem fidem, sanctius quàm*  
*jusjurandum, id pollicerer tibi.* If I knew  
 any thing more sacred than an Oath, where-  
 by to confirm to you the truth of what I say,  
 I would make use of it.

I will



I will crave your patience a little longer, whilst by way of inference from this Discourse, I represent to you the great Sin of *Swearing in common conversation*, upon trivial and needless occasions; and the hainousness of the sin of *Perjury*.

I. *First*, The great sin of *Swearing*, upon trivial and needless occasions, in common conversation. Because an Oath is a solemn thing and reserved for great occasions, to give confirmation to our word in some weighty matter, and to put an end to controversies which cannot otherwise be peremptorily and satisfactorily decided. And therefore to use Oaths upon light occasions argues great profaneness and irreverence of Almighty God. So *Ulpian* the great Roman Lawyer observes, *Nonnullos esse faciles ad jurandum contemptu Religionis, that mens proneness to swearing comes from a contempt of Religion*; than which nothing disposeth men more to Atheism and Infidelity. Besides that it doth many times surprize men unawares into Perjury: And how can it be otherwise, when men use to interlard all their careless talk with Oaths, but that they must often be Perjur'd? And which is worse, it prepares men for deliberate perjury: For with those

those who are accustomed to swear upon light occasions, an Oath will go off with them more roundly about weightier matters. *From a common custome of swearing (saith Hierocles) men easily slide into perjury: Therefore (says he) if thou wouldest not be perjured, do not use to swear.* And this perhaps is the meaning of St. James, when he cautions Christians so vehemently against common swearing, *ὅτι μὴ εἰς ὅτι οὐκ ἐν ὀρκῷ*, (for so some of the best ancient Copies read it) *lest ye fall into hypocrisie, that is, lest ye lye and be perjured, by using your selves to rash and inconsiderate swearing.*

And men expose themselves to this danger to no purpose; Oaths in common discourse being so far from confirming a man's word, that with wise men they much weaken it: For common swearing (if it have any serious meaning at all) argues in a man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation, and is an acknowledgement that he thinks his bare word not to be worthy of credit. And it is so far from adorning and filling a man's discourse that it makes it look swoln and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes persons of gentle and good breeding. - Besides that it is a great incivility,

vility, because it highly offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons; who cannot be presumed with any manner of ease and patience to hear God affronted, and his great and glorious Name so irreverently tost upon every slight occasion,

And it is no excuse to men that many times they do it ignorantly, and not observing and knowing what they do. For certainly it is no extenuation of a fault, that a man hath got the habit of it so perfect that he commits it when he does not think of it: Which consideration should make men oppose the beginnings of this Vice, lest it grow into a habit very hard to be left. *Nemo novit, nisi qui expertus est, quàm sit difficile consuetudinem jurandi extinguere*, saith St. Austin; No man knows, but he that hath tryed, how hard it is to get rid of this custome of Swearing: But yet it is certain men may do it, by resolution and great care of themselves: For he that can chuse whether he will speak or not, can chuse whether he will swear or not when he speaks. *Major consuetudo majorem intentionem flagitat*; The more inveterate a custome is, the greater care should be used to break our selves of it.

In

In short, This practice is so contrary to so plain a Precept of our Saviour, and by the breach whereof we incur so great a danger (as St. James assures us) that it must be a great charity that can find out a way to reconcile a common custom of swearing with a serious belief of the Christian Religion: Which I would to God those who are concerned would seriously lay to heart. Especially, since this Sin of all others hath the least of Temptation to it. Profit or Pleasure there is none in it, nor any thing in mens natural tempers to incite them to it. For though some men pour out Oaths so freely as if they came naturally from them, yet surely no man is born of a swearing constitution.

All that can be pretended for it, is Custom and Fashion: But to shew that this is no Excuse, it is very observable that it is particularly in the matter of Oaths and Perjury that the Holy Ghost gives that caution, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.*

And lastly it deserves to be considered, that this sin is so much the greater because of the frequent returns of it in those that are accustomed to it. So that although it were but small in it self (as it

it is not ) yet the frequent practice of this sin would quickly mount it up to a great score.

2. *Secondly*, To represent the heinousness of the sin of *Perjury*. But before I aggravate this Crime, it is fit to let men know how many ways they may be guilty of it.

1<sup>st</sup>. When a man asserts upon oath what he knows to be otherwise: Or promiseth what he does not intend to perform. In both these cases the very act of swearing is Perjury. And so likewise when a man promiseth upon oath to do that which it is unlawfull for him to do; because this oath is contrary to a former obligation.

2<sup>dly</sup>. When a man is uncertain whether what he swears to, be true. This likewise is Perjury, in the act; though not of the same degree of guilt with the former, because it is not so fully and directly against his knowledge and conscience. For men ought to be certain of the truth of what they assert upon oath, and not to swear at a venture. And therefore no man ought positively to swear to the truth of any thing but what he himself hath seen or heard: This being the highest assurance men are capable of in this world.

world. In like manner, he is guilty of perjury in the same degree, who promisseth upon oath what he is not morally and reasonably certain he shall be able to perform.

3dly. They are likewise guilty of Perjury, who do not use great plainness and simplicity in oaths; but answer *equivocally* and doubtfully, or with reservation of something in their minds, thinking thereby to save the truth of what they say. And we all know who they are that make use of these arts, and maintain them to be lawfull; to the infinite scandal of the Christian Religion and prejudice of humane Society, by doing what in them lies to destroy all Faith and mutual Confidence among men. For what can be a greater affront to God, than to use his Name to deceive men? And what can more directly overthrow the great end and use of oaths, which are for *confirmation*, and to *put an end to strife*? Whereas by these arts the thing is left in the same uncertainty it was before, and there is no decision of it. For there is hardly any form of words can be devised so plain, as not to be lyable to *Equivocation*; To be sure, a man when he swears may always reserve something in

L

his



his mind which will quite alter the sense of whatever he can say or promise upon oath. And this may be laid down for a certain Rule, That all departure from the simplicity of an oath is a degree of Perjury and a man is never a whit the less forsworn because his perjury is a little finer and more artificial than ordinary. And though men think by this device to save themselves harmless from the guilt of so great a Sin, they do really increase it, by adding to their iniquity the impudent folly of mocking God and deceiving themselves.

And whereas it is pleaded in the favour of *mental reservation*, that the whole Proposition, as made up of what is express in words and of that which is reserved in the mind, is true; For instance, if a man being ask'd upon Oath whether he be a Priest, shall answer he is not, reserving in his mind that he is not a Priest of *Bacchan*, or some such thing, the whole Proposition is true, and then they say a man may swear to that which is true, without danger of perjury: This is of no force, because, though the whole proposition be true, it is deceitfull, and contrary to that sincerity which ought to be in an oath: And the end of an oath is hereby likewise



likewise defeated, which is to ascertain the truth of what we say: But if a man reserve something in his mind which alters the truth of what he says, the thing is still as doubtfull and uncertain as it was before. Besides, if this be a good reason, a man may swear with reservation in all cases, because the reason equally extends to all cases; for if the truth of the Proposition, as made up of what is express'd in words and reserv'd in the mind, will excuse a man from Perjury, then no man can be perjur'd that swears with reservation: But this the *Casuits* of the *Roman Church* do not allow, but only in some particular cases, as *before an incompetent Judge*, or the like; for they see well enough that if this were allow'd in all cases, it would destroy all faith among men. And therefore since the reason extends alike to all cases, it is plain that it is to be allow'd in none.

4thly. He is guilty of Perjury after the act, who having a real intention when he swears, to perform what he promiseth, yet afterwards neglects to do it: Not for want of Power (for so long as that continues the obligation ceaseth) but for want of Will, and due regard to his oath.

Now that Perjury is a most heinous Sin, is evident, because it is contrary to

so plain and great a Law of God; one of the ten *Words or Precepts* of the Moral Law, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; thou shalt not bring or apply the Name of God to a falsehood: Or, as *Josephus* renders it, *Thou shalt not adjure God to a false thing*: Which our *Saviour* renders yet more plainly, *Matth. 5. 33. Thou shalt not forswear thy self*. For he seems to refer to the *third* Commandment when he says, *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thy self*, as he had done before to the *6th. and 7th.* when he says, *It was said to them of old time, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery*. So that the primary, if not the sole intention of this Law, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*, is to forbid the great sin of Perjury. And I do not remember that in Scripture the phrase of *taking God's name in vain* is used in any other sense. And thus it is certainly used, *Prov. 30. 9. Lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain: i. e.* lest Poverty should tempt me to steal, and stealth should engage me in Perjury. For among the *Jews* an oath was rendered to him that was suspected of theft, as appears

appears from *Levit. 6. 2.* where it is said, *If any one be guilty of theft, and lyeth concerning it, or sweareth falsely; he shall restore all that about which he hath sworn falsely. Lest I steal, and take the name of the Lord my God in vain;* that is, be perjured, being examined upon oath concerning a thing stoln. And for this reason the thief and the perjured person are put together, *Zech. 5. 4.* where it is said, *that a curse shall enter into the house of the thief, and of him that sweareth fasly by the name of God.* From all which it is very probable, that the whole intention of the 3<sup>d</sup>. Commandment is to forbid this great sin of Perjury. To deter men from which, a severe threatning is there added; *for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain;* that is, he will most severely punish such a one. And 'tis very observable, that there is no threatning added to any other Commandment, but to *this* and the *second*; Intimating to us that, next to Idolatry and the worship of a false God, Perjury is one of the greatest affronts that can be offered to the divine Majesty. This is one of those sins that cries so loud to Heaven, and quickens the pace of God's judgments, *Mal. 3. 9.* *I will come near to you in judgment, and be*

*a swift witness against the swearer.* For this God threatens utter destruction to the man and his house, *Zech. 5. 4.* speaking of the curse that goeth over the face of the whole earth; God (says he) will bring it forth, and it shall enter into the house of him that sweareth falsely by the name of God, and shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof. It shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it. This sin by the secret judgment of God undermines Estates and Families to the utter ruine of them. And among the *Heathen* it was always reckoned one of the greatest of Crimes, and which they did believe God did not only punish upon the guilty person himself, but upon his family and posterity; and many times upon whole Nations, as the Prophet also tells us, that *because of Oath the Land mourns.*

I need not use many words to aggravate this sin; it is certainly a Crime of the highest nature. Deliberate Perjury being directly against a man's knowledge, so that no man can commit it without staring his Conscience in the face; which is one of the greatest aggravations of any Crime. And it is equally a sin against

*both*

*both Tables*; being the highest affront to God, and of most injurious consequence to men. It is an horrible abuse of the name of God, an open contempt of his Judgment, and an insolent defiance of his Vengeance: And in respect of men, it is not only a wrong to this or that particular person who suffers by it, but Treason against humane Society; subverting at once the foundations of publick Peace and Justice, and the private security of every man's life and fortune. It is a defeating of the best and last way that the wisdom of men could devise for the decision of doubtfull matters. *Solomon* very fully and elegantly expresseth the destructive nature of this sin, *Prov. 25. 18. A false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow*: Intimating, that amongst all the instruments of ruine and mischief that have been devised by mankind, none is of more pernicious consequence to humane Society than Perjury, and breach of Faith. It is *a pestilence that usually walketh in darkness*, and a secret stab and blow against which many times there is no possibility of defence.

And therefore it highly concerns those who upon these and the like occasions are

called upon their Oath, whether as *Jurors* or *Witnesses*, to set God before their eyes, and to have his fear in their hearts, whenever they come to take an oath. And to govern and discharge their consciences in this matter by known and approved Rules, and by the Resolutions of pious and wise men; and not by the loose Reasonings and Resolutions of *Pamphlets*, sent abroad to serve the turns of unpeaceable and ill-minded men (whether *Atheists*, or *Papists*, or others) on purpose to debauch the Consciences of men by teaching them to play fast and loose with oaths. And it is a very sad sign of the decay of Christian Religion amongst us, to see so many who call themselves Christians, to make so little conscience of so great a sin, as even the Light of Nature would blush and tremble at.

I will conclude all with those excellent Sayings of the Son of *Sirach* concerning these two sins (I have been speaking of) of Profane Swearing, and Perjury, *Eccles.* 23. 9, 10, &c. *Accustom not thy mouth to swearing; neither use thy self to the naming of the holy One. A man that useth much swearing shall be filled with iniquity; and the plague shall never depart from his house. If he shall offend, his sin shall be*

upon



upon him; and if he acknowledge not his sin, he maketh a double offence. And if he swear falsely, he shall not be innocent, but his house shall be full of calamities. And to represent to us the dreadfull nature of this sin of Perjury, *There is* (saith he) *a word that is clothed about with death,* meaning a rash and false Oath; *There is a word that is clothed about with death,* God grant it be not found in the heritage of Jacob: For all such things shall be far from the godly; and they will not wallow in these sins. From which God preserve all good men, and make them carefull to preserve themselves; as they value the present peace of their own consciences, and the favour of Almighty God in this World and the other, for his Mercies sake in Jesus Christ. To whom, &c.





---

A  
S E R M O N

Preached at the

F U N E R A L

Of the Reverend

M<sup>r</sup>. THOMAS GOUGE,

the 4th of *Novemb.* 1681.

At *St. Anne's Blackfryars* ;

With a brief account of his Life.

---

SERMON

Preached at the

FUNERAL

Of the Reverend

MR. THOMAS GOUGE

the 21<sup>st</sup> of August: 1681.

At St. Anne's Church:

With a brief account of his Life.

T  
P  
An  
th  
V  
Frie  
dece  
in c

**The Right Worshipfull**

**THE**

**PRESIDENT,**

**THE**

**TREASURER,**

**And the rest of the worthy Governours of the Hospital of Christ Church in LONDON.**

**W** H E N upon the request of  
*some of the Relations and  
 Friends of the Reverend Mr. Gouge  
 deceased, and, to speak the truth,  
 in compliance with mine own incli-*  
*nation*

nation to do right to the memory of  
so good a man, and to set so great  
an Example in the view of all men,  
I had determin'd to make this Dis-  
course publick; I knew not where  
more fitly to address it than to your  
selves who are the living pattern of  
the same Vertue, and the faithfull  
dispensers and managers of one of  
the best and greatest Charities in  
the world: Especially since he had a  
particular relation to you, and was  
pleased for some years last past, with-  
out any other consideration but that  
of Charity, to employ his constant  
pains in Catechising the poor Chil-  
dren of your Hospital; wisely con-  
sidering of how great consequence it  
was to this City, to have the foun-  
dations of Religion well laid in the  
tender years of so many persons who  
were afterwards to be planted then  
in several Professions; and from a

true

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

1559

the humility of mind, being ready  
to stoop to the meanest office and ser-  
vice, to do good.

I have heard from an intimate  
Friend of his that he would some-  
times with great pleasure say, that  
he had two Livings which he would  
not exchange for two of the greatest  
in England, meaning Wales and  
Christ's Hospital: Contrary to  
common account, he esteemed every  
advantage of being usefull and ser-  
viceable to God and men a rich  
Benefice, and those his best Pa-  
trons and Benefactors, not who  
did him good, but who gave him  
the opportunity and means of do-  
ing it. To you therefore as his  
Patrons this Sermon doth of right  
belong, and to you I humbly de-  
dicate it; heartily beseeching Al-  
mighty

mighty God, to raise up many by  
his example that may serve their  
generation according to the will  
of God, as he did. I am

Your Faithfull

and humble Servant

*Jo. Tillotson.*



A

## S E R M O N

Preached at the Funeral of

M<sup>r</sup>. THOMAS GOUGE,

With a short account of his Life.

LUKE 20. 37, 38.

*Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living : For all live to him.*

**T**HE occasion of these words of our blessed Saviour was an objection which the *Sadduces* made against the Resurrection, grounded

ded upon a case which had sometimes happened among them, of a woman that had had seven brethren successively to her husbands. Upon which case they put this Question to our Saviour; *whose wife of the seven shall this woman be at the Resurrection?* That is, if men live in another world, how shall the controversy between these seven brethren be decided? for they all seem to have an equal claim to this woman, each of them having had her to his wife.

This captious Question was not easy to be answered by the *Pharisees*, who fancied the enjoyments of the next life to be of the same kind with the sensual pleasures of this world, only greater and more durable. From which Tradition of the *Jews* concerning a sensual Paradise, *Mahomet* seems to have taken the pattern of his; as he did likewise many other things from the Jewish Traditions. Now upon this supposition, that in the next life there will be marrying and giving in marriage, it was a Question not easily satisfied, Whose wife of the seven this woman should then be?

But our Saviour clearly avoids the whole force of it, by shewing the different state of men in this world, and in the

the other. *The children of this world* (says he) *marry, and are given in marriage; but they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* And he does not barely and magisterially assert this Doctrine, but gives a plain and substantial Reason for it; *because they cannot die any more.* After men have lived a while in this world they are taken away by death, and therefore marriage is necessary to maintain a succession of mankind; but in the other world men shall become immortal and live for ever, and then the reason of marriage will wholly cease: For when men can die no more there will then be no need of any new supplies of mankind.

Our Saviour having thus cleared himself of this Objection by taking away the ground and foundation of it, he produceth an Argument for the proof of the Resurrection; in the Words of my Text; *Now that the dead are raised, Moses even shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,* That is, when in one of his Books God is brought in speaking to him out of the bush, and calling

himself by the title of the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*. From whence our Saviour infers the Resurrection, because *God is not the God of the dead but of the living: For all live to him.*

My design from these words is, to shew the force and strength of this Argument which our Saviour urgeth for the proof of the Resurrection. In order whereunto I shall,

*First*, Consider it as an Argument *ad hominem*, and shew the fitness and force of it to convince those with whom our Saviour disputed.

*Secondly*. I shall enquire, Whether it be more than an Argument *ad hominem*? And if it be, wherein the real and absolute force of it doth consist?

And then, I shall apply this Doctrine of the Resurrection to the present Occasion.

- I. *First*. We will consider it as an Argument *ad hominem*, and shew the fitness and force of it to convince those with whom our Saviour disputed. And this will appear if we carefully consider these *four* things.

I. What

1. What our Saviour intended directly and immediately to prove by this Argument.

2. The extraordinary veneration which the *Jews* in general had for the Writings of *Moses*, above any other Books of the Old Testament.

3. The peculiar notion which the *Jews* had concerning the use of this Phrase or expression of *God's being any ones God*.

4. The great respect which the *Jews* had for these three Fathers of their Nation, *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*. For each of these make our Saviour's Argument more forcible against those with whom he disputed.

*First.* We will consider what our Saviour intended directly and immediately to prove by this Argument. And that was this, That there is another state after this life, wherein men shall be happy or miserable according as they have lived in this world. And this doth not only suppose the immortality of the Soul, but so far as the Body is an essential part of man doth by consequence infer the resurrection of the Body; because otherwise the *man* would not be happy or mi-

ferable in the other world. But I cannot see any sufficient ground to believe that our Saviour intended by this Argument directly and immediately to prove the resurrection of the Body, but only by consequence, and as it follows from the admission of a future state wherein men shall be rewarded or punished. For that Reason of our Saviour, that *God is not a God of the dead but of the living*, if it did directly prove the resurrection of the Body, it would prove that the Bodies of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* were raised to life again, at or before that time when God spake to *Moses* and called himself the God of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*: But we do not believe this; and therefore ought not to suppose that it was the intention of our Saviour directly and immediately to prove the resurrection of the Body, but only (as I said before) a future state. And that this was all our Saviour intended will more plainly appear, if we consider what that Errour of the *Sadduces* was which our Saviour here confutes. And *Josephus*, who very well understood the difference of the Sects among the *Jews*, and gives a particular account of them, makes not the least mention of any Controversie between the *Pharisees*



*Pharisees* and the *Sadduces* about the resurrection of the Body. All that he says, is this. That the *Pharisees* hold the immortality of the Soul, and that there are Rewards and Punishments in another world: But the *Sadduces* denied all this, and that there was any other state after this life. And this is the very same account with that which is given of them in the *New Testament*, ver. 27. of this Chap. The *Sadduces* who deny that there is any resurrection. The meaning of which is more fully declared, *Acts* 23. 8. The *Sadduces* say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the *Pharisees* confess both. That is, the *Sadduces* denied that there was any other state of men after this life, and that there was any such thing as an immortal Spirit, either Angels, or the Souls of men surviving their Bodies. And, as Dr. *Hammond* hath judiciously observed, this is the true importance of the word *ἀνάστασις*, viz. a future or another state; unless in such Texts where the Context does restrain it to the raising again of the Body, or where some word that denotes the body, as *σῶμα* or *σώματος*, is added to it.



*Secondly.* The force of this Argument against those with whom our Saviour disputed will further appear, if we consider the great veneration which the *Jews* in general had for the Writings of *Moses* above any other Books of the Old Testament; which they (especially the *Sadduces*) looked upon only as Explications and Comments upon the Law of *Moses*: But they esteemed nothing as a necessary Article of Faith which had not some foundation in the Writings of *Moses*. And this seems to me to be the true Reason why our Saviour chose to confute them out of *Moses*, rather than any other part of the Old Testament: And not as many learned men have imagined, because the *Sadduces* did not receive any part of the Old Testament but only the *five* Books of *Moses*; so that it was in vain to argue against them out of any other. This I know hath been a general opinion, grounded I think upon the mistake of a passage in *Josephus*, who says the *Sadduces* only received the written Law. But if we carefully consider that passage, we shall find that *Josephus* doth not there oppose the Law to the other Books of the Old Testament, which were also written; but

but to *Oral Tradition*. For he says expressly, that the *Sadduces* only received the written Law, but the *Pharisees*, over and besides what was written, received the Oral which they call *Tradition*.

I deny not but that in the *later Prophets* there are more express *Texts* for the proof of a future state, than any are to be found in the Books of *Moses*. As *Daniel* 12. 2. *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*. And indeed it seems very plain that holy men among the *Jews*, towards the expiration of the Legal dispensation, had still clearer and more express apprehensions concerning a future state than are to be met with in the Writings of *Moses*, or of any of the *Prophets*.

The Law given by *Moses* did suppose the *Immortality of the Souls of men*, and the expectation of another life after this, as Principles of Religion in some degree naturally known; but made no new and express Revelation of these things: Nor was there any occasion for it, the Law of *Moses* being a Political Law, not intended for the Government of mankind, but of one particular Nation; and therefore

fore was establish'd, as Political Laws are, upon temporal promises and threatenings; promising temporal prosperity to the observation of its precepts, and threatening the breach of them with temporal judgments and calamities.

And this I take to be the true reason why arguments fetch'd from another world are so obscurely insisted upon under that Dispensation; not but that another life after this was always suppos'd, and was undoubtedly the hope and expectation of good men under the Law, but the clear discovery of it was reserv'd for the Times of the *Messias*. And therefore as those Times drew on, and *the Son of righteousness* was nearer his rising, the shadows of the night began to be chased away, and mens apprehensions of a future state to clear up; so that in the time of the *Maccabees* good men spake with more confidence and assurance of these things.

It is likewise to be consider'd, that the temporal calamities and sufferings with which the *Jews* were almost continually harass'd from the time of their Captivity had very much wean'd good men from the consideration of temporal promises, and awaken'd their minds to the more

serious

serious thoughts of another world. It being natural to men when they are destitute of present comfort, to support themselves with the expectation of better things for the future, and as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* expresseth it, *ch. 6. v. 18. to fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope that is before them*, and to employ their reason to fortifie themselves as well as they can in that persuasion.

And this I doubt not was the true occasion of those clearer and riper apprehensions of good men concerning a future state, in those times of distress and persecution; it being very agreeable to the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Providence not to leave his People destitute of sufficient support under great trials and sufferings: And nothing but the hopes of a better life could have born up the spirits of men under such cruel tortures. And of this we have a most remarkable Instance in the History of the *seven Brethren* in the *Maccabees*, who being cruelly tortured and put to death by *Antiochus*, do most expressly declare their confident expectation of a resurrection to a better life. To which History the Apostle certainly refers, *Heb. 11. 35.* when he says, *others were tortured, not accepting deli-*

*deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection*: where the word, which we render *were tortur'd*, is ἐτυμπναισμός, which is the very word used in the *Maccabees* to express the particular kind of torture us'd upon them; besides that being offer'd *deliverance* they most resolutely refus'd to accept of it, with this express declaration that they hop'd for a *resurrection* to a *better* life.

But to return to my purpose, notwithstanding there might be more clear and express *Texts* to this purpose in the ancient *Prophets*, yet our Saviour knowing how great a regard not only the *Sadducees*, but all the *Jews* had to the Authority of *Moses*, he thought fit to bring his proof of the resurrection out of his Writings, as that which was the most likely to convince them.

*Thirdly.* If we consider further the peculiar Notion which the *Jews* had concerning the use of this phrase or expression of *God's being any ones God*. And that was this. That God is no where in Scripture said to be any ones God while he was alive. And therefore they tell us that while *Isaac* lived, God is not called the God of *Isaac*, but the *father of Isaac*. As

Gen.

Gen. 31. 42. *Except the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac had been with me ; and ver. 53. when Laban made a Covenant with Jacob, 'tis said that Laban did swear by the God of Abraham, and the God of Nabor, and the God of their Fathers , but Jacob swore by the fear of his Father Isaac.* I will not warrant this Observati- on to be good, because I certainly know it is not true. For God doth expressly call himself the God of *Isaac*, while *Isaac* was yet alive, Gen. 28. 13. *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac.* It is sufficient to my purpose, that this was a Notion anciently currant among the *Jews*. And therefore our Sa- viour's Argument from this Expression must be so much the stronger against them : For if the Souls of men be extin- guished by death (as the *Sadduces* belie- ved) what did it signifie to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* to have God called *their* God after they were dead ? But surely for God to be any ones God doth signifie some great benefit and advantage ; which yet (according to the notion which the *Jews* had of this Phrase) could not respect this life, because, according to *them*, God is not said to be any ones God till after he is dead : But it is thus said of *Abraham*,  
*Isaac*



*Isaac and Jacob after their death, and therefore our Saviour infers very strongly against them, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not extinguished by death, but do still live somewhere: for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And then he adds by way of further explication, for all live to him. That is, though those good men who are departed this life, do not still live to us, here in this world, yet they live to God, and are with him.*

*Fourthly.* If we consider the great respect which the Jews had for those three Fathers of their Nation, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.* They had an extraordinary opinion of them, and esteemed nothing too great to be thought or said of them. And therefore we find that they looked upon it as a great arrogance for any man to assume any thing to himself that might seem to set him above *Abraham, Isaac or Jacob.* With what indignation did they fly upon our Saviour on this account? *John 4. 12. Art thou greater than our father Jacob? and chap. 8. ver. 53. Art thou greater than our father Abraham; whom makest thou thyself?* Now they who had so superstitious a veneration for them,



them, would easily believe any thing of privilege to belong to them : so that our Saviour doth with great advantage instance in them, in favour of whom they would be enclined to extend the meaning of any promise to the utmost, and allow it to signifie as much as the words could possibly bear. So that it is no wonder that the *Text* tells us that this Argument put the *Sadduces* to silence. They durst not attempt a thing so odious, as to go about to take away any thing of privilege from *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*.

And thus I have, as briefly as the matter would bear, endeavoured to shew the finess and force of this Argument to convince those with whom our Saviour disputed. I come now, in the

II. *Second* place, to enquire Whether this be any more than an Argument *ad hominem* ? And if it be, wherein the real and absolute force of it doth consist ?

II.

I do not think it necessary to believe that every Argument used by our Saviour, or his Apostles, is absolutely and in itself conclusive of the matter in debate. For an Argument which doth not really prove the thing in Question, may yet be a very good Argument *ad hominem* ; and  
in

in some cases more convincing to him with whom we dispute than that which is a better Argument in it self. Now it is possible, that our Saviour's intention might not be to bring a conclusive proof of the Resurrection, but only to confute those who would needs be disputing with him. And to that purpose an Argument *ad hominem*, which proceeded upon grounds which they themselves could not deny, might be very proper and effectual. But although it be not necessary to believe, that this was more than an Argument *ad hominem*; yet it is the better to us, if it be absolutely and in it self conclusive of the thing in Question. And this I hope will sufficiently appear, if we consider these *four* things.

1. That for God to be *any ones* God doth signifie some very extraordinary blessing and happiness, to those persons of whom this is said.

2. If we consider the eminent faith and obedience of the persons to whom this promise is made.

3. Their condition in this world.

4. The general importance of this promise, abstracting from the persons particularly specified and named in it, *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*.

*First.*

*First.* If we consider, that for God to be *any ones* God doth signifie some very extraordinary blessing and happiness to those persons of whom this is said. It is a big word for God to declare himself to be *any ones* God: and the least we can imagine to be meant by it, is that God will in an extraordinary manner imploy his power and wisdom to doe him good: that he will concern himself more for the happiness of those whose God he declares himself to be, than for others.

*Secondly.* If we consider the eminent faith and obedience of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*. *Abraham* left his Country in obedience to God, not knowing whither he was to go. And, which was one of the most unparallel'd and strange instances of faith and obedience that can almost be imagined, he was willing to have sacrificed his only Son at the command of God. *Isaac* and *Jacob* were also very good men, and devout worshippers of the true God, when almost the whole world was sunk into Idolatry and all manner of impiety. Now what can we imagin, but that the good God did design some extraordinary reward to such

N

faithli-

faithfull servants of his? especially if we consider, that he intended this gracious declaration of his concerning them, for a standing encouragement to all those who in after Ages should follow the faith and tread in the steps of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*.

*Thirdly.* If we consider the condition of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* in this world. The Scripture tells us, that *they were pilgrims and strangers upon the earth*; had no fixed and settled habitation, but were forced to wander from one Kingdom and Countrey to another: that they were exposed to many hazards and difficulties, to great troubles and afflictions in this world; so that there was no such peculiar happiness befell them in this life above the common rate of men, as may seem to fill up the big words of this promise, that *God would be their God*. For so far as the Scripture History informs us, and further we cannot know of this matter, *Esau* was as prosperous as *Jacob*; and *Jacob* had a great many more troubles and afflictions in this life than *Esau* had. But surely when God calls himself *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, this signifies that God intended some very pecu-

peculiar blessing and advantage to them above others: which seeing they did not enjoy in this world, it is very reasonable to believe that one time or other this gracious declaration and promise of God was made good to them.

And therefore the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, chap. 11. from this very expression of God's being said *to be the God of Abraham* and others, argues that some extraordinary happiness was reserved for them in another world: and that upon this very ground I am now speaking of, namely, because the condition of *Abraham*, and some others, was not such in this world as might seem to answer the fulness of this promise. *All these*, says he, *died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.* From whence he reasons very strongly that these good men might reasonably expect something better than any thing that had befallen them in this world. *For they*, says he, *that say such things declare plainly that they seek a Country; which at the 16. verse he calls a better Country, that is a heavenly.* *They that say*

*such things*: that is, they who acknowledge themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in the earth, and yet pretend that God hath promised *to be their God*, declare plainly that they expect some reward beyond this life. From all which he concludes, *Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, because he hath prepared for them a City*: intimating that if no happiness had remained for these good men in another world, this promise of God's *being their God*, would shamefully have fallen short of what it seemed to import, *viz.* some extraordinary reward and blessing worthy of God to bestow; something more certain and lasting than any of the enjoyments of this world: which since God had abundantly performed to them in the happiness of another life, his promise to them was made good to the full, and he needed not *be ashamed to be called their God*. But if nothing beyond this life had been reserved for them, that Saying of old *Jacob* towards the conclusion of his life, *jew and evil have the days of the years of my life been*, would have been an eternal reflexion upon the truth and faithfulness of him who had so often called himself the God of *Jacob*.

But



But now, because to all this it may be said, that this Promise seems to have been made good to *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, in this world: For was not God the God of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, when he took such a particular and extraordinary care of them, and protected them from the manifold dangers they were exposed to, by such a special and immediate providence, *suffering no one to do them harm, but rebuking even Kings for their sakes*? Was not he *Abraham's* God, when he blest him so miraculously with a Son in his old age, and with so considerable an estate to leave to him? Was not that Saying of *Jacob* a great acknowledgment of the gracious providence of God towards him, *with my staff passed I over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands*? And though it must needs be a very cutting affliction to him to lose his Son *Joseph*, as he thought he had done, yet that was more than recompensed to him in *Joseph's* strange advancement in *Egypt*, whereby God put into his hands the opportunity of saving his Father and his whole Family alive. And was not God the God of *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, in making them Fathers of so numerous an off-spring, as afterwards be-



came a great Nation: and in giving them a fruitfull Land, and bringing them to the quiet possession of it by such a series of wonderfull Miracles? what need then is there of extending this promise to another world? doth it not seem abundantly made good in those great blessings which God bestowed upon them whilst they liv'd, and afterwards upon their posterity, in this world? And does not this agree well enough with the first and most obvious sense of these words, *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, that is, I am he that was their God while they were alive, and am still the God of their posterity for their sakes? I say, because the *three* former Considerations are liable to this Objection, which seems wholly to take off the force of this Argument; therefore for the full clearing of this matter, I will add one consideration more.

*Fourthly* then, we will consider the general importance of this Promise, abstracting from the particular persons specified and named in it, viz. *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; and that is, that God will make a wide and plain difference between good and bad men; he will be

So the God of good men as he is not of the wicked ; and some time or other put every good man into a better and happier condition than any wicked man : so that the general importance of this promise is finally resolved into the equity and justice of the Divine Providence.

And unless we suppose another life after this, it will certainly be very hard, and I think impossible, to reconcile the History of the Old Testament, and the common appearances of things in this world, with the justice and goodness of God's Providence.

It cannot be denied, but that *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and several good men in the Old Testament, had many signal Testimonies of the Divine favour vouchsafed to them in this world : But we read likewise of several wicked men, that had as large a share of temporal blessings. It is very true that *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* had great estates, and were petty Princes : But *Pharaoh* was a mighty Prince in comparison of them ; and the Kingdom of *Egypt*, which probably was the first and chief seat of Idolatry, was at the same time one of the most potent and flourishing Kingdoms in the world ; and was blest with a prodigious

gious plenty, whereby they were furnished with store of corn, when good *Jacob* and his Family had like to have perished by famine. 'Tis true, *Joseph* was advanc'd to great power in *Egypt*, and thereby had the opportunity of saving his Fathers house, by settling them, and feeding them in *Egypt*: But then it is to be considered again, that this cost them very dear, and their coming thither was the occasion of a long and cruel bondage to *Jacob's* posterity, so that we see that these good men had no such blessings, but what were common with them to many others that were wicked: and the blessings which God bestowed upon them had great abatements by the intermixture of many and sore afflictions.

It seems then upon the whole matter, to be very plain, that the Providences of God in this world towards good men are so contrived, that it may sufficiently appear, to those who wisely consider the works of God, that they are not neglected by him; and yet that these outward blessings are so promiscuously dispensed, that no man can certainly be concluded to be a good man from any happiness he enjoys in this life: And the  
pro-

prosperity of good men is usually on purpose so shadowed and mixed with afflictions, as may justly raise their hopes to the expectation of a more perfect happiness and better reward than any they meet with in this world.

And if so, then the general importance of this Promise, that *God will be the God* of good men, must necessarily signify something beyond this world: Because in this world there is not that clear difference universally made between good and bad men which the Justice of the Divine Providence doth require, and which seems to be intended in the general sense of this Promise. For if this Promise (though personally made to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*) be intended, as the Scripture tells us it was, for a standing encouragement to good men in all Ages, then it must contain in it this general Truth, *that God will some time or other plentifully reward every good man*; that is, he will do something far better for him than for any wicked man: But if there be no life after this, it is impossible to reconcile this sense of it with the course of God's Providence, and with the History of the Bible.

And

And to make this out fully and at once, I will only produce that single Instance of *Abel* and *Cain*. *Abel* offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*, and he had this testimony, that he pleased God; which was in effect to declare, that God was the God of *Abel* and not of *Cain*; so that by virtue of the general importance of this Promise, it might justly be expected that *Abel's* condition should have been much better than *Cain's*: But if there be no happiness after this life, *Abel's* was evidently much worse. For upon this very account, that he pleased God better, he was killed by *Cain*, who had offered to God a slight and contemptuous offering. And *Cain* lived a long time after, and grew great, and built Cities. Now supposing there were no other life after this, this must have been a most horrible Example to all Ages, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, and have made men for ever afraid to please God upon such hard terms; when they were sure of no other reward for so doing, but to be oppress'd and slain by the hands of the wicked. So that if this were really the Case, it would puzzle all the Wit and Reason of mankind to vindicate the equity

quity and justice of the Divine Providence, and to rescue it out of the hands of this terrible Objection.

And thus I have as briefly as I could, endeavour'd to clear to you the force of this Argument used by our Saviour for the Proof of the Resurrection. And have the longer insisted upon it, because at first appearance it seems to be but a very obscure and remote Argument: And yet so much the more necessary to be clear'd, because this in all probability was that very *Text* upon which the *Jews* in our Saviour's time grounded their belief of a future state, in opposition to the error of the *Sadduces*; and which they call'd by way of eminency *the promise made of God unto the Fathers*. As will plainly appear, if we consider what *S. Paul* says to this purpose, when he appeals so often to the *Pharisees* for his agreement with them in this Article of the Resurrection, and likewise in the ground of it from *the promise made of God unto the fathers*. Act. 24. 14, 15. *But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets;*



phets; and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead. From whence it is clear, that they both grounded their hope of the resurrection upon something written in the Law and the Prophets; and what that was he expresseth more particularly c. 26. v. 6, 7. And now I stand, and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers; unto which promise our twelve Tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. By the promise made of God unto the Fathers he means, some promise made by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; for so S. Luke more than once, in his History of the Acts, explains this phrase of the God of their Fathers, Acts 3. 13. The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers; and c. 7. v. 32. I am the God of thy Fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now what was the great and famous Promise which God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? was it not this of being their God? So that it was this very Promise upon which S. Paul tells us the Jews grounded their hope of a future state, because they understood it necessarily to signifie some blessing



bleſſing and happineſs beyond this life.

And now having, I hope, ſufficiently clear'd this matter, I ſhall make ſome improvement of this Doctrine of a future ſtate, and that, to theſe *three* purpoſes.

I. To raiſe our minds above this world and the enjoyments of this preſent life. Were but men thoroughly convinced of this plain and certain Truth, that there is a vaſt difference between Time and Eternity, between a few years and everlaſting Ages: would we but repreſent to our ſelves what thoughts and apprehenſions dying perſons have of this world; how vain and empty a thing it appears to them, how like a pageant and a ſhadow it looks as it paſſeth away from them: methinks none of theſe things could be a ſufficient temptation to any man to forget God and his Soul; but, notwithſtanding all the delights and pleaſures of ſenſe, we ſhould be ſtrangely intent upon the concerns of another world, and almoſt wholly taken up with the thoughts of that vaſt Eternity which we are ready to launch into. For what is there in this world, this *waste and howling wilderneſs*, this rude and barbarous Country which we are but to paſs through,

through, which should detain our affections here, and take off our thoughts from our everlasting habitation; from that *better* and that *heavenly Country*, where we hope to live and be happy for ever?

If we settle our affections upon the enjoyments of this present Life, so as to be extremely pleas'd and transported with them, and to say in our hearts, *It is good for us to be here*; if we be excessively griev'd or discontented for the want or loss of them, and if we look upon our present state in this world any otherwise than as a preparation and passage to a better life, it is a sign that our faith and hope of the happiness of another life is but very weak and faint, and that we do not heartily and in good earnest believe what we pretend to do concerning these things. For did we stedfastly believe and were thoroughly persuaded of what our Religion so plainly declares to us concerning the unspeakable and endless happiness of good men in another world, our affections would sit more loose to this world, and our hopes would raise our hearts as much above these present and sensible things *as the heavens are high above the earth*; we should value nothing

thing here below, but as it serves for our present support and passage, or may be made a means to secure and increase our future felicity.

2. The consideration of another Life should quicken our preparation for that blessed state which remains for us in the other world. This Life is a state of probation and trial. This world is God's school, where immortal spirits clothed with flesh are trained and bred up for eternity. And then certainly it is not an indifferent thing and a matter of slight concernment to us, how we live and demean our selves in this world: whether we indulge our selves in *ungodliness and worldly lusts*, or *live soberly, and righteously, and godly* in this present world: No; it is a matter of infinite moment, as much as our souls and all eternity are worth. Let us not deceive our selves; for as we sow so shall we reap: If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption; but if we sow to the spirit, we shall of the spirit reap everlasting life. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. The righteous hath hopes in his death. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,*

*upright, for the end of that man is peace.* But the ungodly are not so : whoever hath lived a wicked and vicious life feels strange throws and pangs in his conscience when he comes to be cast upon a sick bed. *The wicked is like the troubled sea* (saith the Prophet) *when it cannot rest;* full of trouble and confusion, especially in a dying hour. It is death to such a man to look back upon his life, and a hell to him to think of eternity. When his guilty and trembling Soul is ready to leave his Body, and just slepping into the other world, what horreur and amazement do then seise upon him? what a rage doth such a man feel in his breast, when he seriously considers, that he hath been so great a fool as for the false and imperfect pleasure of a few days to make himself miserable for ever?

3. Let the consideration of that unspeakable Reward which God hath promised to good men at the Resurrection, encourage us to obedience and a holy life. We serve a great Prince who is able to promote us to honour; a most gracious master who will not let the least service we doe for him pass unrewarded. This is the Inference which the Apostle makes

makes from his large discourse of the Doctrine of the Resurrection, 1 Cor. 15. 58. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.* Nothing will make death more welcome to us than a constant course of service and obedience to God. *Sleep, saith Solomon, is sweet to the labouring man:* so after a great diligence and industry in working out our own salvation, and (as it is said of David) *-serving our generation according to the will of God,* how pleasant will it be to fall asleep? And as an usefull and well-spent life will make our death to be sweet, so our resurrection to be glorious. Whatever act of piety we do to God, or of charity to men; whatever we lay out upon the poor and afflicted and necessitous, will all be considered by God in the day of recompences, and most plentifully rewarded to us.

And surely no consideration ought to be more prevalent to perswade us to alms-deeds and charity to the poor, than that of a resurrection to another life. Besides the promises of this life which are made to works of charity, and there is  
O not

not any grace or vertue whatsoever, which hath so many and so great promises of temporal blessings made to it in Scripture as this grace of charity; I say, besides the promises of this Life, the great promise of eternal Life is in Scripture in a more especial manner entail'd upon it. *Lake 12. 33. Give alms, saith our Saviour, provide your selves baggs which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, and c. 16. v. 9. make to your selves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye shall fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. And 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, &c. that they doe good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life; the word *ῥημεν*, which our Translation renders *foundation* according to the common use of it, seems in this place to have a more peculiar notion, and to signifie the security that is given by a pledge, or by an instrument or obligation of contract for the performance of Covenants. For besides that the phrase of *laying up in store, or treasuring**



up a foundation, seems to be a very odd jumbling of metaphors; this very word *ἀσφάλειαν* almost necessarily requires this notion as it is used by the same Apostle, in his second Epistle to Timothy, chap. 2. ver. 19. where it is said, *the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, &c.* a seal being very improper to strengthen a foundation, but very fit to confirm a Covenant. And then surely it ought to be render'd, *the Covenant of God remains firm, having this seal.* And so likewise in the foremention'd Text, the sense will be much more easie and eurrant if we render it thus, *treasuring up, or providing for themselves a good security or pledge against the time to come; I add pledge,* because that anciently was the common way of security for things lent: besides, that the Apostle seems plainly to allude to that passage, *Tobit, 4. 8, 9. If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly, &c. for thou layest up a good treasure for thy self against the day of necessity, δέμας γὰρ ἀγαθὸν ἀποταύρις, for thou treasurest up for thy self a good pledge; to which this of the Apostle exactly answers, ἀποταύρις ἑαυτοῖς δεμίλιον καλόν, treasuring up, or providing for themselves a good pledge or security, &c.* the sense however



is plain, that the charity of Alms is one of the best ways of securing our future happiness.

And yet further to encourage us to abound in works of charity, the Scripture tells us that proportionably to the degrees of our charity shall be the degrees of our reward; upon this consideration the *Apostle* exhorts the *Corinthians* to be liberal in their charity, *2 Cor. 9. 6. he that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, but he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.* So that whatever we lay out in this kind is to the *greatest advantage*, and upon the *best security*; two considerations which use to be very prevalent with rich men to lay out their money.

We certainly do it to the *greatest advantage*; because God will consider the very smallest thing that any of us do in this kind. He that shall give so much as a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward; these last words, *shall not lose his reward*, are a *metonymy*, and signifie much more than they seem to speak, *viz.* that he shall have a very great reward, infinitely beyond the value of what he hath done.

And

And we do it likewise upon the best security; so Solomon assures us, *Prov. 19. 17. He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again;* and we may be confident of our security where God is surety; nay, he tells us that in this case he looks upon himself as principal, and that whatever we do in ways of mercy and charity to the poor he takes as done to himself. So our Lord hath told us, *Matt. 25. 40. and we shall hear the same from him again out of his own mouth when he shall appear in his Majesty to judge the World, Then the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

And on the other side, the Scripture nowhere passeth a more severe doom upon any sort of persons, than upon those who have no bowels of compassion towards their brethren in distress. That is a fearfull sentence indeed, which the Apostle pronounceth upon such persons, *Jam. 2. 13. He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy.* And this our Saviour represents to us in a most solema manner, in that lively description

scription which he makes of the Judgment of the great Day, *Matt. 25. 31, &c.* When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, before the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat, &c. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. And if this be, as most certainly it is, a true and proper representation of the process of that Day, then the great matter of enquiry will be, What works of charity and mercy have  
been

been done or neglected by us, and accordingly a Sentence of eternal happiness, or misery, will be pass'd upon us: I was hungry, did ye feed me or did ye not? I was naked, did ye clothe me or did ye not? I was sick and in prison, did ye visit me or did ye not? Not but that all the good or evil of our lives, in what kind soever, shall then be brought to account; But that our Saviour did chuse to instance particularly, and only in things of this nature, should methinks make a mighty impression upon us, and be a powerfull consideration to oblige us to have a very peculiar regard to works of mercy and charity, and to make sure to *abound in this Grace*; that when we shall appear before the great Judge of the World we may find that mercy from Him which we have shew'd to others, and which we shall all undoubtedly stand in need of *in that Day*.

And among all our acts of charity, those which are done upon least probability and foresight of their meeting with any recompence in this world, either by way of real requital or of fame and reputation, as they are of all other most acceptable to God, so they will certainly have the most ample reward in another world. So our Lord hath assur'd us, and

accordingly adviseth us, *Luke 14. 12, 13, 14.* When thou makest a feast invite not the rich, because they will recompense thee again: but call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, for they cannot recompense thee, but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. If we be Religious for worldly ends, and serve God, and doe good to men, onely in contemplation of some temporal advantage, we take up with present payment, and cut our selves short of our future reward: of such, saith our Lord, *verily I say unto you, they have their reward;* they are their own security, and have taken care to satisfie themselves, and therefore are to expect nothing from God: But let us who call our selves Christians doe something for God, for which we have no hopes to be recompensed in this world; that we may shew that we trust God and take his word, and dare venture upon the security of the next world and that recompense which shall be made *at the resurrection of the just.*

And how great and glorious that shall be, our Saviour tells us immediately before my Text. *They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, they can die no more*

more; but they are equal to the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

If then we be heirs of such glorious hopes, and believe that he who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, will also be our God; let us live as it becomes the Candidates of heaven, and the children of the resurrection, and such as verily believe another life after this, and hope one day to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God.

And now that I have represented to you what encouragement there is to well-doing, and particularly to works of Charity, from the consideration of the blessed reward we shall certainly meet with at the Resurrection of the just: I shall crave your patience a little longer, whilst I propose to you one of the fairest Examples of this kind which either this or perhaps any other Age could easily present us withall: I mean our deceased Brother to whom we are now paying our last solemn respects, the Reverend Mr. THOMAS GOUGE; the worthy Son of a reverend and learned Divine of this City, Dr. William Gouge, who was Minister of this Parish of Black Friars

six



six and forty years; he died in 1653. and still lives in the memory of many here present.

I must confess, that I am no friend to Funeral *Panegyrics*, where there is nothing of extraordinary worth and merit in the party commended to give occasion and foundation for them: In such cases, as praises are not due to the dead, so they may be of ill-consequence to the living: not only by bringing those of our Profession that make a practice of it under the suspicion of officious and mercenary flattery, but likewise by encouraging men to hope that they also may be well spoken of, and even Sainted when they are dead, though they should have done little or no good in their life: But yet on the other hand, to commend those excellent Persons the vertues of whose lives have been bright and exemplary, is not only a piece of justice due to the dead, but an act of great charity to the living, setting a pattern of well-doing before our eyes, very apt and powerfull to incite and encourage us *to go and doe likewise.*

Upon both these considerations, first to doe right to the memory of so good a man, and then in hopes that the example may



may prove fruitfull and have a considerable effect upon others to beget the like goodness and charity in them, I shall endeavour, in as narrow a compass as may be, to give you the just character of this truly pious and charitable Man, and by setting his life in a true light to recommend with all the advantage I can so excellent a pattern to your imitation.

He was born at *Bow* near *Stratford* in the County of *Midlesex* the 19th. day of *September* 1605. He was bred at *Eton* School, and from thence chosen to *King's* College in *Cambridge* being about 20 years of Age, in the year 1626. After he had finish'd the course of his studies, and taken his Degrees, he left the *University* and his *Fellowship*, being presented to the Living of *Colsden* near *Croyden* in *Surrey*, where he continued about 2 or 3 years; and from thence was remov'd to *S. Sepulchres* in *London*, in the year 1638. and the year after thinking fit to change his condition match'd into a very worthy and ancient Family, marrying one of the Daughters of *Sir Robert Darcy*.

Being thus settled in this large and populous *Parish*, he did with great solicitude and pains discharge all the parts of  
a vigi-

a vigilant and faithfull Minister, for about the space of 24 years. For besides his constant and weekly labour of preaching, he was very diligent and charitable in visiting the sick, and ministering not only spiritual counsel and comfort to them, but likewise liberal relief to the wants and necessities of those that were poor and destitute of means to help themselves in that condition. He did also every morning throughout the year Catechize in the Church, especially the poorer sort who were generally most ignorant; and to encourage them to come thither to be instructed by him he did once a week distribute money among them, not upon a certain day, but changing it on purpose as he thought good, that he might thereby oblige them to be constantly present: These were chiefly the more aged poor, who being past labour had leisure enough to attend upon this exercise. As for the other sort of poor who were able to work for their living, he set them at work upon his own charge, buying Flax and Hemp for them to spin, and what they spun he took off their hands paying them for their work, and then got it wrought into Cloth, and sold it as he could, chiefly among his friends, himself

himself bearing the whole loss. And this was a very wise and well chosen way of charity, and in the good effect of it a much greater charity than if he had given these very persons freely and for nothing so much as they earned by their work; because by this means he took many off from begging, and thereby rescued them at once from two of the most dangerous temptations of this world, *Idleness* and *Poverty*; and by degrees reclaim'd them to a virtuous and industrious course of life, which enabled them afterwards to live without being beholden to the charity of others.

And this course so happily devis'd and begun by Mr. *Gouge* in his own Parish, was I think that which gave the first hint to that worthy and usefull Citizen Mr. *Thomas Firmin* of a much larger design, which hath been prosecuted by him for some years with that vigour and good success in this City, that many hundreds of poor Children, and others who liv'd idle before, unprofitable both to themselves and the publick, are continually maintain'd at work and taught to earn their own livelihood much in the same way: He being, by the generous assistance and charity of many worthy and well-

well-dispos'd Persons of all ranks, enabled to bear the unavoidable loss and charge of so vast an undertaking; and by his own forward inclination to charity, and his unwearied diligence and activity, extraordinarily fitted to sustain and go through the incredible pains of it.

But to return to our deceased Friend, concerning whom I must content my self to pass over many things worthy to be remembred of him, and to speak only of those Vertues of his which were more eminent and remarkable.

Of his Piety towards God, which is the necessary foundation of all other Graces and Vertues, I shall only say this, that it was great and exemplary, but yet very still and quiet, without stir and noise, and much more in substance and reality than in shew and ostentation; and did not consist in censuring and finding fault with others, but in the due care and government of his own life and actions, and in *exercising himself continually to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men*; in which he was such a proficient, that even after long acquaintance and familiar conversation with him it was not easie to observe any thing that might deserve blame.

He

He particularly excell'd in the more peculiar vertues of conversation, in *modesty, humility, meekness, cheerfulness,* and in *kindness and charity towards all men.*

So great was his *modesty*, that it never appear'd either by word or action, that he put any value upon himself. This I have often observ'd in him, that the Charities which were procur'd chiefly by his application and industry, when he had occasion to give an account of them, he would rather impute to any one who had but the least hand and part in the obtaining of them, than assume any thing of it to himself. Another instance of his modesty was, that when he had quitted his Living of *S. Sepulchres* upon some dissatisfaction about the terms of conformity, he willingly forbore preaching, saying there was no need of him here in *London* where there were so many worthy Ministers, and that he thought he might do as much or more good in another way which could give no offence. Only in the later years of his life, being better satisf'd in some things he had doubted of before, he had License from some of the Bishops to preach in *Wales* in his progress, which he was the more willing to doe, because

because in some places he saw great need of it, and he thought he might do it with greater advantage among the poor People, who were the more likely to regard his instructions, being recommended by his great charity so well known to them, and of which they had so long had the experience and benefit. But where there was no such need, he was very well contented to hear others persuade men to goodness and to practice it himself.

He was clothed with humility, and had in a most eminent degree that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which S. Peter says, is in the sight of God of so great price: So that there was not the least appearance either of Pride or Passion in any of his words or actions. He was not only free from anger and bitterness, but from all affected gravity and moroseness. His conversation was affable and pleasant; he had a wonderfull serenity of mind and evenness of temper, visible in his very countenance; he was hardly ever merry, but never melancholy and sad; and for any thing I could discern, after a long and intimate acquaintance with him, he was upon all occasions and accidents perpetually the same; always cheerful,



cheerfull, and always kind; of a disposition ready to embrace and oblige all men; allowing others to differ from him, even in opinions that were very dear to him; and provided men did but *fear God* and *work righteousness*, he lov'd them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary: In all which he is very worthy to be a pattern to men of all Perswasions whatsoever.

But that Vertue which of all other shone brightest in him, and was his most proper and peculiar character, was his cheerfull and unwearied diligence in acts of pious Charity. In this he left far behind him all that ever I knew, and, as I said before, had a singular sagacity and prudence in devising the most effectual ways of doing good, and in managing and disposing his charity to the best purposes, and to the greatest extent; always, if it were possible, making it to serve some end of Piety and Religion; as the instruction of poor children in the principles of Religion, and furnishing grown persons that were ignorant with the *Bible* and other good Books; strictly obliging those to whom he gave them to a diligent reading of them, and when he had opportunity exacting of them an account how they had profited by them.



In his occasional alms to the poor, in which he was very free and bountifull, the relief he gave them was always mingled with good counsel, and as great a tenderness and compassion for their souls as bodies; which very often attain'd the good effect it was likely to have, the one making way for the other with so much advantage, and men being very apt to follow the good advice of those who give them in hand so sensible a pledge and testimony of their good will to them.

This kind of charity must needs be very expensive to him, but he had a plentiful estate settled upon him and left him by his Father, and he laid it out as liberally in the most prudent and effectual ways of charity he could think of, and upon such persons as, all circumstances considered, he judg'd to be the fittest and most proper objects of it.

For about nine or ten years last past he did, as is well known to many here present, almost wholly apply his charity to *Wales*, because there he judg'd was most occasion for it: And because this was a very great work, he did not only lay out upon it whatever he could spare out of his own estate, but employ'd his whole  
time

time and pains to excite and engage the charity of others for his assistance in it.

And in this he had two excellent designs. One, to have poor children brought up to read and write, and to be carefully instructed in the principles of Religion: The other, to furnish persons of grown age, the poor especially, with the necessary helps and means of knowledge, as the Bible, and other Books of piety and devotion, in their own Language; to which end he procur'd the *Church-Catechism*, the *Practice of Piety*, and that best of Books the *Whole Duty of Man*, besides several other pious and useful *Treatises*, some of them to be translated into the *Welsh* Tongue, and great numbers of all them to be printed, and sent down to the chief Towns in *Wales*, to be sold at easie rates to those that were able to buy them, and to be freely given to those that were not.

And in both these designs, through the blessing of God upon his unwearied endeavours, he found very great success. For by the large and bountifull contributions which chiefly by his industry and prudent application were obtain'd from charitable Persons of all Ranks and conditions, from the *Nobility* and *Gentry* of

*Wales* and the neighbouring *Counties*, and several of that Quality in and about *London*; from divers of the Right Reverend *Bishops*, and of the *Clergy*; and from that perpetual fountain of charity the City of *London*, led on and encourag'd by the most bountifull example of the Right Honourable the *Lord Mayor* and the *Court of Aldermen*; to all which he constantly added two Thirds of his own estate, which as I have been credibly inform'd was two hundred pounds a year: I say, by all these together there were every year *eight hundred*, sometimes a *thousand* poor children educated as I said before; and by this example several of the most considerable *Towns* of *Wales* were excited to bring up at their own charge the like number of poor children, in the like manner, and under his inspection and care.

He likewise gave very great numbers of the Books above mention'd, both in the *Welsh* and *English* Tongues, to the poorer sort, so many as were unable to buy them and willing to reade them. But which was the greatest work of all, and amounted indeed to a mighty charge, he procured a new and very fair Impression of the Bible and Liturgy of the Church

of

of *England* in the *Welsh* Tongue (the former Impression being spent, and hardly twenty of them to be had in all *London*) to the number of eight thousand; one thousand whereof were freely given to the poor, and the rest sent to the principal Cities and Towns in *Wales* to be sold to the rich at very reasonable and low rates, viz. at four shillings a piece well bound and clasped; which was much cheaper than any *English* Bible was ever sold that was of so fair a print and paper: A work of that charge, that it was not likely to have been done any other way, And for which this Age, and perhaps the next, will have great cause to thank God on his behalf.

In these good works he employed all his time and care and pains, and his whole heart was in them; so that he was very little affected with any thing else, and seldom either minded or knew any thing of the strange occurrences of this troublesome and busie Age, such as I think are hardly to be parallel'd in any other: Or if he did mind them, he scarce ever spoke any thing about them. For this was the business he laid to heart, and knowing it to be so much and so certainly the Will of his heavenly Father, it was

his meat and drink to be doing of it; and the good success he had in it was a continual feast to him, and gave him a perpetual serenity both of mind and countenance. His great love and zeal for this work made all the pains and difficulties of it seem nothing to him: He would rise early and sit up late, and continued the same diligence and industry to the last, though he was in the threescore and seventeenth year of his Age. And that he might manage the distribution of this great charity with his own hands, and see the good effect of it with his own eyes, he always once, but usually twice a year, at his own charge travelled over a great part of *Wales*, none of the best Countries to travel in; But for the love of God and men he endured all that, together with the extremity of heat and cold ( which in their several seasons are both very great there ) not onely with patience but with pleasure. So that all things considered there have not, since the primitive times of Christianity, been many among the sons of men to whom that glorious character of the Son of God might be better applied, that *he went about doing good*. And *Wales* may as worthily boast of this truly Apostolical man

is of their famous *S. David*; who was also very probably a good man, as those times of ignorance and superstition went. But his goodness is so disguised by their fabulous *Legends* and stories which give us the account of him, that it is not easie to discover it. Indeed ridiculous miracles in abundance are reported of him: as, that upon occasion of a great number of people resorting from all parts to hear him preach, for the greater advantage of his being heard, a mountain all on a sudden rose up miraculously under his feet, and his voice was extended to that degree that he might be distinctly heard for two or three miles round about. Such phantastical miracles as these make up a great part of his History. And admitting all these to be true (which a wise man would be loth to doe) our departed Friend had that which is much greater and more excellent than all these; a fervent charity to God and men; which is more than to *speak* (as they would make us believe *S. David* did) *with the tongue of men and Angels*, more than to raise or remove mountains.

And now methinks it is pity so good a design so happily prosecuted should fall and die with this good man. And it is



now under deliberation, if possible, still to continue and carry it on, and a very worthy and charitable person pitched upon for that purpose, who is willing to undertake that part which he that is gone performed so well. But this will depend upon the continuance of the former Charities and the concurrence of those worthy and well-disposed persons in *Wales* to contribute their part as formerly, which I perswade my self they will cheerfully do.

I will add but one thing more concerning our deceased Brother, that though he meddled not at all in our present heats and differences as a Party, having much better things to mind, yet as a looker on he did very sadly lament them, and for several of the last years of his life he continued in the Communion of our Church, and, as he himself told me, thought himself obliged in conscience so to do.

He died in the 77th. year of his age, *Octob. 29th, 1681.* It so pleased God that his death was very sudden, and so sudden, that in all probability he himself hardly perceived it when it happened, for he died in his sleep, so that we may say of him as it is said of *David*, *after he had served*



*served his generation according to the will of God he fell asleep.*

I confess that a sudden death is generally undesirable, and therefore with reason we pray against it; because so very few are sufficiently prepared for it: But to him the constant employment of whose life was the best preparation for death that was possible, no death could be sudden; nay, it was rather a favour and blessing to him, because by how much the more sudden so much the more easie: As if God had designed to begin the reward of the great pains of his life in an easie death. And indeed it was rather a translation than a death; and, saving that his body was left behind, what was said of *Enoch* may not unfitly be applied to this pious and good man with respect to the suddennels of his change; *he walked with God, and was not, for God took him.*

And God grant that we who survive, may all of us sincerely endeavour to tread in the steps of his exemplary piety and charity; of his labour of love, his unwearyed diligence and patient continuance in doing good, that we may meet with that encouraging commendation which he hath already received from the mouth of  
of

of our Lord. Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you always that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; To whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A

Which again

A  
S E R M O N

Preached at the

F U N E R A L

Of the Reverend

BENJAMIN WHICHCOT, D. D.

May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1683.

---

2 COR. V. 6.

*Wherefore we are always confident,  
knowing that whilst we are at  
home in the body we are absent  
from the Lord.*

**T**Hese Words contain one of the  
chief grounds of encouragement  
which the Christian Religion gives us  
against the fear of death. For our clearer  
under-

understanding of them it will be requisite to consider the *Context*, looking back as far as the beginning of the *Chapter*: where the *Apostle* pursues the argument of the foregoing *Chapter*; which was to comfort and encourage Christians under their afflictions and sufferings from this consideration, that these did but prepare the way for a greater and more glorious reward; *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* And suppose the worst, that these sufferings should extend to death, there is comfort for us likewise in this case, *ver. 1.* of this *Chapter*, *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, &c.* If our earthly house of this tabernacle, he calls our body an *earthly house*, and that we may not look upon it as a certain abode and fixed habitation, he doth by way of correction of himself add, that it is but a *tabernacle* or tent which must shortly be taken down: And when it is, *we shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* This is a description of our heavenly habitation, in opposition to our earthly house or tabernacle: It is a *building of God*, not like

like those houses or tabernacles which men build, and which are liable to decay and dissolution, to be taken down or to fall down of themselves, for such are those houses of clay which we dwell in *whose foundations are in the dust*, but an habitation prepared by God himself, *a house not made with hands*; that which is the immediate work of God being in Scripture opposed to that which is made with hands and effected by humane concurrence and by natural means: And being the immediate work of God, as it is excellent, so it is lasting and durable, which no earthly thing is; *eternal in the heavens*, that is eternal and heavenly.

*For in this we groan earnestly*; that is, while we are in this body we groan by reason of the pressures and afflictions of it. *Desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.* *Desiring to be clothed upon*; that is, we could wish not to put off these bodies, not to be stripp'd of them by death, but to be of the number of those who at the coming of our Lord without the putting off these bodies shall be changed and clothed upon with their house which is from heaven, and without dying be invested with

with those spiritual and glorious and heavenly bodies which men shall have at the Resurrection.

This I doubt not is the *Apostle's* meaning in these Words; in which he speaks according to a common opinion among the Disciples grounded (as St. *John* tells us) upon a mistake of our Saviour's words concerning him, *If I will that he tarry till I come*: upon which St. *John* tells us that *there went a Saying among the brethren that that disciple should not die*; that is, that he should live till Christ's coming to Judgment, and then be changed; and consequently that Christ would come to Judgment before the end of that Age. Suitable to this common opinion among Christians the *Apostle* here says, *in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked*. It hath puzzled *Interpreters* what to make of this passage, and well it might; for whatever be meant by being clothed, how can they that are clothed be found naked? But I think it is very clear that our *Translatours* have not attained the true sense of this passage, *εἴτε καὶ ἐνδεδυμένοι, ἔτι γυμνοί, ὡς ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι*, which is most naturally

not

hundred thus, *if so be we shall be found clothed, and not naked*: That is, if the coming of Christ shall find us in the body and not divested of it: if at Christ's coming to Judgment we shall be found alive, and not dead. And then the sense of the whole is very clear and current: we are desirous to be clothed upon with our house from heaven (that is, with our spiritual and immortal bodies) if so be it shall so happen that at the coming of Christ we shall be found alive in these bodies, and not stripp'd of them before by death. And then it follows, *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burthened* (that is, with the afflictions and pressures of this life) *not that we would be unclothed* (that is, not that we desire by death to be divested of these bodies) *but clothed upon* (that is, if God see it good we had rather be found alive, and changed, and without putting off these bodies have immortality as it were superinduced) *that so mortality might be swallowed up of life*. The plain sense is, that he rather desires (if it may be) to be of the number of those who shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, and have this mortal and corruptible body while they are clothed with it changed into a spiritual and incorruptible body,  
without



without the pain and terrour of dying: of which immediate translation into heaven without the painfull divorce of soul and body by death, *Enoch* and *Elias* were examples in the old Testament.

It follows, *ver. 5.* Now he that hath wrought for us the self same thing is God: that is, it is he who hath fitted and prepared us for this glorious change: who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit. The Spirit is frequently in Scripture called the witness and seal and earnest of our future happiness and blessed resurrection or change of these vile and earthly bodies into spiritual and heavenly bodies. For as the resurrection of Christ from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost is the great proof and evidence of immortality, so the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwelling in us is the pledge and earnest of our resurrection to an immortal life.

From all which the *Apostle* concludes in the words of the *Text*, *Therefore we are always confident*, that is, we are always of good courage against the fear of death, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, *ἐνδυσμένους ἐν τῷ σώματι*, which may better be rendred whilst we converse or sojourn in the body, than whilst we are at home;

home; Because the design of the *Apostle* is to shew that the body is not our house but our tabernacle; and that whilst we are in the body we are not at home, but pilgrims and strangers. And this notion the *Heathens* had of our present life and condition in this world. *Ex vita discedo* (saith *Tully*) *tanquam ex hospitio non tanquam ex domo; commorandi enim natura diversorium nobis, non habitandi locum dedit.* We go out of this life as it were from an Inn, and not from our home; nature having designed it to us as a place to sojourn but not to dwell in.

We are absent from the Lord; that is, we are detained from the blessed sight and enjoyment of God, and kept out of the possession of that happiness which makes Heaven.

So that the *Apostle* makes an immediate opposition between our continuance in the body, and our blissfull enjoyment of God; and lays it down for a certain truth, that whilst we remain in the body we are detained from our happiness, and that so soon as ever we leave the body we shall be admitted into it, knowing that whilst we converse in the body we are absent from the Lord. And ver. 8. we are willing rather to be absent from the body  
 Q and

and present with the Lord; intimating that so soon as we quit these bodies we shall be admitted to the blessed light and enjoyment of God.

My design from this *Text* is to draw some usefull *Corollaries* or *Conclusions* from this Assertion of the *Apostle*, That whilst we are in these bodies we are detained from our happiness; and that so soon as ever we depart out of them we shall be admitted to the possession and enjoyment of it. And they are these;

I. This Assertion shews us the vanity and falshood of that opinion, or rather dream, concerning the sleep of the soul from the time of death till the general Resurrection. This is chiefly grounded upon that frequent Metaphor in Scripture by which death is resembled to sleep, and those that are dead are said to be fallen asleep. But this Metaphor is nowhere in Scripture, that I know of, applied to the soul but to the body resting in the grave in order to its being awakened and raised up at the Resurrection. And thus it is frequently used with express reference to the body. *Dan. 12. 2.* *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth*

earth shall awake. *Matth. 27. 52. And the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose. Acts 13. 36. David after he had served his own generation by the will of God fell on sleep, and was laid to his fathers and saw corruption; which surely can no otherwise be understood than of his body. 1 Cor. 15. 21. Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept; that is, the resurrection of his body is the earnest and assurance that ours also shall be raised. And ver. 51. We shall not all sleep, but shall all be changed; where the Apostle certainly speaks both of the death and change of these corruptible bodies. 1 Thessal. 4. 14. If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him; That is the bodies of those that died in the Lord shall be raised, and accompany him at his coming. So that it is the body which is said in Scripture to sleep, and not the soul. For that is utterly inconsistent with the Apostles Assertion here in the Text, that while we are in the body we are absent from the Lord, and that so soon as we depart out of the body we shall be present with the Lord. For surely to be with the Lord must signifie a state*

of happiness, which sleep is not, but only of inactivity : Besides, that the *Apostle's* Argument would be very flat, and it would be but a cold encouragement against the fear of death, that so soon as we are dead we shall fall asleep and become insensible. But the *Apostle* useth it as an Argument why we should be willing to dye as soon as God pleaseth, and the sooner the better, because so soon as we quit these bodies we shall be present with the Lord, that is, admitted to the blisfull sight and enjoyment of him ; and while we abide in the body we are detained from our happiness : But if our souls shall sleep as well as our bodies till the general Resurrection, it is all one whether we continue in the body or not, as to any happiness we shall enjoy in the mean time ; which is directly contrary to the main scope of the *Apostle's* Argument.

2. This Assertion of the *Apostle's* doth perfectly conclude against the feigned Purgatory of the Church of *Rome* ; which supposeth the far greater number of true and faithfull Christians, of those who dye in the Lord and have obtained eternal redemption by him from hell not to pass  
imme-

immediately into a state of happiness, but to be detained in the suburbs of Hell in extremity of torment (equal to that of hell for degree, though not for duration) till their souls be purged, and the guilt of temporal punishments, which they are liable to, be some way or other paid off and discharged. They suppose indeed some very few holy persons (especially those who suffer Martyrdom) to be so perfect at their departure out of the body as to pass immediately into Heaven, because they need no purgation: But most Christians they suppose to dye so imperfect that they stand in need of being purged; and according to the degree of their imperfection are to be detain'd a shorter or a longer time in Purgatory.

But now, besides that there is no *Text* in *Scripture* from whence any such state can probably be concluded (as is acknowledged by many learned men of the Church of *Rome*) and even that *Text* which they have most insisted upon (*they shall be saved, yet so as by fire*) is given up by them as insufficient to conclude the thing. *Estius* is very glad to get off it, by saying there is nothing in it against Purgatory: Why? no body pretends that, but we might reasonably

Q 3                      expect



expect that there should be something for it in a *Text* which hath been so often produced and urged by them for the proof of it. I say, besides that there is nothing in Scripture for Purgatory, there are a great many things against it, and utterly inconsistent with it. In the parable of the *Rich man* and *Lazarus*, which was designed to represent to us the different states of good and bad men in another world, there is not the least intimation of Purgatory, but that good men pass immediately into a state of happiness and bad men into a place of torment. And *St. John, Rev. 14. 13.* pronounceth all that dye in the Lord happy, because *they rest from their labours*; which they cannot be said to do who are in a state of great anguish and torment, as those are supposed to be who are in Purgatory.

But above all, this Reasoning of *Saint Paul* is utterly inconsistent with any imagination of such a state. For he encourageth all Christians in general against the fear of death from the consideration of that happy state they should immediately pass into, by being admitted into the presence of God; which surely is not Purgatory. *We are of good courage (says he) and willing rather to be absent from the*



*the body*: And great reason we should be so, if so soon as we leave the body we are present with the Lord. But no man sure would be glad to leave the body to go into a place of exquisite and extreme torment, which they tell us is the case of most Christians when they dye. And what can be more unreasonable, than to make the *Apostle* to use an argument to comfort all Christians against the fear of death which concerns but very few in comparison. So that if the *Apostle's* reasoning be good, that while we are in this life we are detained from our happiness, and so soon as we depart this life we pass immediately into it, and therefore death is desirable to all good men: I say, if this reasoning be good, it is very clear that Saint *Paul* knew nothing of the Doctrine now taught in the Church of *Rome* concerning Purgatory; because that is utterly inconsistent with what he expressly asserts in this *Chapter*; and quite takes away the force of his whole Argument.

3. To encourage us against the fear of death. And this is the Conclusion which the *Apostle* makes from this consideration. Therefore (says he) we are of good courage, knowing that whilst we converse in the

body we are absent from the Lord. There is in us a natural love of life, and a natural horror and dread of death; so that our spirits are apt to shrink at the thoughts of the approach of it. But this fear may very much be mitigated and even overruled by Reason and the considerations of Religion. For death is not so dreadful in it self, as with regard to the consequences of it: And those will be as we are, comfortable and happy to the good, but dismal and miserable to the wicked. So that the only true antidote against the fear of death is the hopes of a better life; and the only firm ground of these hopes is the mercy of God in *Jesus Christ*, upon our due preparation for another world by repentance and a holy life. For the sting of death is sin; and when that is taken away the terrour and bitterness of death is past: And then death is so far from being dreadful, that in reason it is extremely desirable; because it lets us into a better state, such as only deserves the name of life. *Hi vivunt qui ex corporum vinculis tanquam è carcere evolvunt: vestra vero quæ dicitur vita, mors est.* They truly live (could a Heathen say) who have made their escape out of this prison of the body; but that which men commonly

*commonly call life is rather death than life.*  
To live indeed, is to be well, and to be happy; and that we shall never be till we are got beyond the grave.

4. This Consideration should comfort us under the loss and death of Friends, which certainly is one of the greatest grievances and troubles of humane life. For if they be fit for God, and go to him when they dye, they are infinitely happier than it was possible for them to have been in this world: and the trouble of their absence from us is fully balanced by their being present with the Lord. For why should we lament the end of that life, which we are assured is the beginning of immortality? One reason of our trouble for the loss of friends is because we loved them: But it is no sign of our love to them to grudge and repine at their happiness. But we hoped to have enjoyed them longer: Be it so: yet why should we be troubled that they are happy sooner than we expected? But they are parted from us, and the thought of this is grievous: But yet the consideration of their being parted for a while is not near so sad, as the hopes of a happy meeting again, never to be parted any more,

is

is comfortable and joyfull. So that the greater our love to them was, the less should be our grief for them, when we consider that they are happy, and that they are safe; past all storms, all the troubles and temptations of this life, and out of the reach of all harm and danger for ever. But though the Reason of our duty in this case be very plain, yet the practice of it is very difficult; and when all is said, natural affection will have its course: And even after our Judgment is satisfied, it will require some time to still and quiet our Passions.

5. This Consideration should wean us from the love of life; and make us not only contented but willing and glad to leave this world, whenever it shall please God to call us out of it. This Inference the *Apostle* makes, *ver. 8. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.* Though there were no state of immortality after this life, yet methinks we should not desire to live always in this world. *Habet natura* (says *Tully*) *in aliarum rerum, sic vivendi modum: At nature hath set bounds and measures to other things, so likewise to life; of which men should*

should know when they have enough, and not covet so much of it till they be tyred and cloyed with it. If there were no other inconvenience in long life, this is a great one, that in a long course of time we unavoidably see a great many things which we would not; our own misfortunes and the calamities of others; publick confusions and distractions; the loss of Friends and Relations; or which is worse, their misery; or which is worst of all, their miscarriage: Especially, a very infirm and tedious old age is very undesirable: For who would desire to live long uneasy to himself, and troublesome to others? It is time for us to be willing to dye, when we cannot live with the good will even of our friends: when those who ought to love us best think much that we live so long, and can hardly forbear to give us broad signs that they are weary of our company. In such a case a man would almost be contented to dye out of civility; and not chuse to make any long stay where he sees that his company is not acceptable. If we think we can be welcome to a better place, and to a more delightfull society, why should we desire to thrust our selves any longer upon an ill-natured world, upon

upon those who have much adoe to refrain from telling us that our room is better than our company?

Some indeed have a very happy and vigorous old age, and the taper of life burns clear in them to the last: Their understandings are good, their memories and senses tolerable, their humour pleasant and their conversation acceptable, and their Relations kind and respectfull to them. But this is a rare felicity, and which seldome happens but to those who have lived wisely and vertuously, and by a religious and regular course of life have preserved some of their best spirits to the last, and have not by vice and extravagance drawn off life to the dregs, and left nothing to be enjoyed but infirmities and ill humours, guilt and repentance: But on the contrary have prudently laid up some considerable comforts and supports for themselves against this gloomy day; having stored their minds with wisdom and knowledge, and taken care to secure to themselves the comfortable reflexions of an usefull and well-spent life, and the favour and loving-kindness of God which is better than life it self. But generally the extremities of old age are very peevish and querulous, and a declining and  
tallling



falling back to the weak and helpless condition of Infancy and childhood. And yet less care is commonly taken to please aged persons, and less kindness shewed to them ( unless it be in expectation of receiving greater from them ) than to children: because these are cherished in hopes, the others in despair of their growing better. So that if God see it good it is not desirable to live to try nature, and the kindness and good will of our Relations to the utmost.

Nay there is reason enough why we should be well contented to dye in any Age of our life. If we are young, we have tasted the best of it: If in our middle Age, we have not onely enjoyed all that is desirable of life, but almost all that is tolerable: If we are old, we are come to the dregs of it, and do but see the same things over and over again, and continually with less pleasure.

Especially if we consider the happiness from which we are all this while detained. This life is but our Infancy and childhood in comparison of the manly pleasures and employments of the other state. And why should we desire to be always children; and to linger here below to play the fools yet a little longer? In  
this



this sense that high expression of the Poet is true.

—*Dii celant homines, ut vivere durent,  
Quàm sit dulce mori*—

*The Gods conceal from men the sweetness of dying, to make them patient and contented to live.*

This life is wholly in order to the other. Do but make sure to live well, and there is no need of living long. To the purpose of preparation for another world, the best life is the longest. Some live a great pace, and by continual diligence and industry in serving God and doing good do really dispatch more of the business of life in a few years, than others do in a whole Age; who go such a fanting pace towards heaven, as if they were in no haste to get thither. But if we were always prepared we should rejoyce at the prospect of our end; as those who have been long tost at sea are overjoyed at the sight of land.

I have now done with my *Text*, but have another Subject to speak of; that excellent Man in whose Place I now stand;

stand; whom we all knew, and whom all that knew him well did highly esteem and reverence. He was born in *Shropshire* of a worthy and ancient Family, the *11th* of *March*, 1609. was the sixth Son of his Father: and being bred up to learning and very capable of it, was sent to the University of *Cambridge*, and planted there in *Emanuel College*, where he was chosen Fellow, and was an excellent Tutor and Instructour of Youth, and bred up many persons of great Quality, and others, who afterwards proved usefull and eminent; as many perhaps as any Tutor of that Time.

About the age of four or five and thirty he was made Prevoft of *King's College*; where he was a most vigilant and prudent Governour, a great encourager of Learning and good Order, and by his carefull and wise management of the Estate of the College brought it into a very flourishing condition, and left it so.

It cannot be denied (nor am I much concerned to dissemble it) that here he possess'd another Man's place, who by the iniquity of the Times was wrongfully ejected; I mean *Dr. Collins* the famous and learned Divinity-Professor of that University.

University. During whose life (and he lived many years after) by the free consent of the College there were two shares out of the common Dividend allotted to the Prevost, one whereof was constantly paid to Dr. *Collins*, as if he had been still Prevost. To this Dr. *Whichcot* did not only give his consent (without which the thing could not have been done) but was very forward for the doing of it, though hereby he did not only considerably lessen his own profit, but likewise incur no small censure and hazard, as the Times then were. And lest this had not been kindness enough to that worthy Person whose Place he possessed, in his last Will he left to his Son, Sir *John Collins*, a Legacy of one hundred pounds.

And as he was not wanting either in respect or real kindness to the rightfull Owner, so neither did he stoop to doe any thing unworthy to obtain that Place; for he never took the *Covenant*: And not only so, but by the particular friendship and interest which he had in some of the chief of the *Visitours* he prevailed to have the greatest part of the Fellows of that College exempted from that Imposition; and preserved them in their Places by that means. And to the  
Fellows

fellows that were ejected by the *Visitors*, he likewise freely consented that their full Dividend for that year should be paid them, even after they were ejected. Among these was the Reverend and ingenious Dr. *Charles Mason*; upon whom, after he was ejected, the College did confer a good Living which then fell in their gift, with the consent of the *Presbiter*, who, knowing him to be a worthy man, was contented to run the hazard of the displeasure of those Times.

So that I hope none will be hard upon him, that he was contented upon such terms to be in a capacity to doe good in bad Times.

For, besides his care of the College, he had a very great and good influence upon the University in general. Every Lord's day in the Afternoon, for almost twenty years together, he preached in *Trinity Church*, where he had a great number not only of the young Scholars, but of those of greater standing and best repute for Learning in the University his constant and attentive Auditours: And in those wild and unsettled Times contributed more to the forming of the Students of that University to a sober sense of Religion than any man in that Age.

R

After

After he left *Cambridge* he came to *London*, and was chosen Minister of *Black-Friars*, where he continued till the dreadfull Fire : And then retired himself to a Donative he had at *Milton* near *Cambridge* : where he preached constantly, and relieved the poor, and had their children taught to reade at his owne charge; and made up differences among the neighbours. Here he staid till, by the promotion of the Reverend Dr. *Wilkins*, his Predecessour in this Place, to the Bishoprick of *Chester*, he was by his interest and recommendation presented to this Church. But during the building of it, upon the invitation of the Court of Aldermen, in the Mayoralty of Sir *William Turner*, he preached before that Honourable Auditory at *Guild-Hall* Chapel every Sunday in the afternoon, with great acceptance and approbation, for about the space of seven years.

When his Church was built, he bestowed his pains here twice a week, where he had the general love and respect of his Parish; and a very considerable and judicious Auditory, though not very numerous by reason of the weakness of his voice in his declining age.

It pleased God to bless him, as with a plentiful Estate; so with a charitable Mind: which yet was not so well known to many, because in the disposal of his charity he very much affected secrecy. He frequently bestowed his alms (as I am informed by those who best knew) on poor house-keepers disabled by age or sickness to support themselves, thinking those to be the most proper objects of it. He was rather frugal in expence upon himself, that so he might have wherewithall to relieve the necessities of others.

And he was not onely charitable in his life, but in a very bountifull manner at his death; bequeathing in pious and charitable Legacies to the value of a thousand pounds. To the Library of the University of *Cambridge* fifty pounds: and of *King's College* one hundred pounds: and of *Emanuel College* twenty pounds: To which College he had been a considerable benefactor before; having founded there several Scholarships to the value of a thousand pounds, out of a Charity with the disposal whereof he was entrusted; and which not without great difficulty and pains he at last recovered.

R 2

To



To the Poor of the several Places where his Estate lay, and where he had been Minister he gave above one hundred pounds.

Among those who had been his Servants, or were so at his death, he disposed in Annuities and Legacies in money to the value of above three hundred pounds.

To other charitable uses and among the poorer of his Relations, above three hundred pounds.

To every one of his Tenants he left a Legacy according to the proportion of the Estate they held, by way of remembrance of him: And to one of them that was gone much behind he remitted in his Will seventy pounds. And as became his great goodness, he was ever a remarkably kind Landlord, forgiving his Tenants, and always making abatements to them for hard years or any other accidental losses that happened to them.

I must not omit the wise provision he made in his Will to prevent Law-suits among the Legatees, by appointing two or three persons of greatest prudence and Authority among his Relations final Arbitrators of all differences that should arise.

Having



Having given this account of his last Will, I come now to the sad part of all: sad, I mean, to us, but happiest to him. A little before *Easter* last he went down to *Cambridge*: where, upon taking a great Cold, he fell into a distemper which in a few days put a period to his life. He died in the house of his ancient and most learned Friend, *Dr. Cudworth*, Master of *Christ's College*. During his sickness he had a constant calmness and serenity of mind: and under all his bodily weakness possessed his soul in great patience. After the Prayers for the Visitation of the Sick (which he said were excellent Prayers) had been used, he was put in mind of receiving the Sacrament; to which he answered, that he most readily embraced the proposal: And after he had received it, said to *Dr. Cudworth* I heartily thank you for this most Christian office: I thank you for putting me in mind of receiving this Sacrament: adding this pious ejaculation, *The Lord fulfill all his declarations and promises, and pardon all my weaknesses and imperfections.* He disclaimed all merit in himself; and declared that whatever he was, he was through the grace and goodness of God in *Jesus Christ*.

He expressed likewise great dislike of the Principles of Separation : and said *he was the more desirous to receive the Sacrament that he might declare his full Communion with the Church of Christ all the world over.* He disclaimed Popery, and, as things of near affinity with it, or rather parts of it, *all superstition, and usurpation upon the consciences of men.*

He thanked God, *that he had no pain in his body, nor disquiet in his mind.*

Towards his last he seemed rather unwilling to be detained any longer in this state ; not for any pains he felt in himself, but for the trouble he gave his friends : saying to one of them who had with great care attended him all along in his sickness, *My dear friend, thou hast taken a great deal of pains to uphold a crazy body, but it will not do : I pray thee give me no more Cordials ; for why shouldst thou keep me any longer out of that happy state to which I am going. I thank God I hope in his mercy, that it shall be well with me.*

And herein God was pleased particularly to answer those devout and well-weighed petitions of his which he frequently used in his Prayer before Sermon, which I shall set down in his own words, and I doubt not those that were his constant hearers

hearers do well remember them; And superadd this, O Lord, to all the grace and favour which thou hast shewn us all along in life, not to remove us hence but with all advantage for Eternity, when we shall be in a due preparation of mind, in a holy constitution of soul, in a perfect renunciation of the guise of this mad and sinfull world, when we shall be intirely resigned up to thee, when we shall have clear acts of faith in God by Jesus Christ, high and reverential thoughts of thee in our minds, enlarged and inflamed affections towards thee, &c. And whensoever we shall come to leave this world, which will be when thou shalt appoint (for the issues of life and death are in thy hands) afford us such a mighty power and presence of thy good Spirit that we may have solid consolation in believing, and avoid all consternation of mind, all doubtfulness and uncertainty concerning our everlasting condition, and at length depart in the faith of God's Elect, &c. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

Thus you have the short History of the life and death of this eminent Person; whose just Character cannot be given in

few words, and time will not allow me to use many. To be able to describe him aright it were necessary one should be like him; for which reason I must content my self with a very imperfect draught of him.

I shall not insist upon his exemplary piety and devotion towards God, of which his whole life was one continued Testimony. Nor will I praise his profound Learning, for which he was justly had in so great reputation. The moral improvements of his mind, *a Godlike temper and disposition* (as he was wont to call it) he chiefly valued and aspired after; that universal charity and goodness, which he did continually preach and practise.

His Conversation was exceeding kind and affable, grave and winning, prudent and profitable. He was slow to declare his judgment, and modest in delivering it. Never passionate, never peremptory: so far from imposing upon others, that he was rather apt to yield. And though he had a most profound and well-poized judgment, yet was he of all men I ever knew the most patient to hear others differ from him, and the most easie to be convinced when good Reason was offered; and, which is seldom seen, more  
apt

apt to be favourable to another man's Reason than his own.

Studious and inquisitive men commonly at such an age (at forty or fifty at the utmost) have fixed and settled their Judgments in most Points, and as it were made their *last Understanding*; supposing they have thought, or read, or heard what can be said on all sides of things; and after that, they grow positive and impatient of contradiction, thinking it a disparagement to them to alter their judgment: But our deceased Friend was so wise, as to be willing to learn to the last; knowing that no man can grow wiser without some change of his mind, without gaining some knowledge which he had not, or correcting some error which he had before.

He had attained so perfect a mastery of his Passions, that for the latter and greatest part of his life he was hardly ever seen to be transported with Anger: and as he was extremely carefull not to provoke any man, so not to be provoked by any; using to say, *if I provoke a man he is the worse for my company, and if I suffer my self to be provoked by him I shall be the worse for his.*



He

He very seldom reproved any person in company otherwise than by silence, or some sign of uneasiness, or some very soft and gentle word; which yet from the respect men generally bore to him did often prove effectual: For he understood humane nature very well, and how to apply himself to it in the most easie and effectual ways.

He was a great encourager and kind directour of young Divines: and one of the most candid hearers of Sermons, I think, that ever was: So that though all men did mightily reverence his Judgment, yet no man had reason to fear his Censure. He never spake well of himself, nor ill of others: making good that saying of *Pansa* in *Tully*, *neminem alterius, qui suæ consideret virtuti, invidere*; that no man is apt to envy the worth and vertues of another, that hath any of his own to trust to.

In a word, he had all those vertues, and in a high degree, which an excellent temper; great consideration, long care and watchfulness over himself, together with the assistance of God's grace (which he continually implored, and mightily relied upon) are apt to produce. Particularly he excelled in the vertues of Conversation,



verſation, humanity, and gentleneſs, and humility, a prudent and peaceable and reconciling temper. And God knows we could very ill at this time have ſpared ſuch a Man; and have loſt from among us as it were ſo much balm for the healing of the Nation, which is now ſo miſerably rent and torn by thoſe wounds which we madly give our ſelves. But ſince God hath thought good to deprive us of him, let his virtues live in our memory, and his example in our lives. Let us endeavour to be what he was, and we ſhall one day be what he now is, of bleſſed memory on earth, and happy for ever in heaven.

And now methinks the conſideration of the Argument I have been upon, and of that great Example that is before us, ſhould raiſe our minds above this world and fix them upon the glory and happineſs of the other. Let us then begin heaven here, in the frame and temper of our minds, in our heavenly affections and converſation; in a due preparation for, and in earneſt deſires and breathings after that bleſſed ſtate which we firmly believe and aſſuredly hope to be one day poſſeſſed of: when we ſhall be removed  
out



out of this sink of sin and sorrows into the Regions of blifs and immortality : where we shall meet all those worthy and excellent persons who are gone before us, and whose conversation was so delightfull to us in this world ; and will be much more so to us in the other, when the spirits of just men shall be made perfect, and shall be quit of all those infirmities which did attend and lessen them in this mortal state : when we shall meet again with our dear Brother, and all those good men whom we knew in this world, and with the Saints and excellent persons of all Ages to enjoy their blessed friendship and society for ever, in the presence of the blessed God where is *fulness of joy*, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

In a firm persuasion of this happy state let us every one of us say with *David*, and with the same ardency of affection that he did, *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; O when shall I come and appear before God ?* That so the life which we now live in this world may be a patient continuance in well-doing in a joyfull expectation of the blessed hope and the glorious

*glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be all honour and glory, now and for ever.*

*Now the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to doe his will; working in us always that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

---

A

---

glorious appearance of the great God and  
 the Father and the Holy Ghost who  
 now and glory, now and for ever.

Now the God of peace who brought again  
 from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the  
 great forerunner of the resurrection, the blood  
 of the everlasting covenant, made us  
 self in every good work to do his will,  
 working in us always that which is good,  
 pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ  
 to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A

For  
 a  
 Wh  
 a  
 l  
 t  
 But  
 b  
 t

M  
 ture

---

A  
PERSUASIVE  
TO  
Frequent Communion.

---

I COR. XI. 26, 27, 28.

*For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

*Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord.*

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

**M**Y design in this Argument is, from the consideration of the Nature of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,

per, and of the perpetual Use of it to the end of the world, to awaken men to a sense of their duty and the great obligation which lies upon them to the more frequent receiving of it. And there is the greater need to make men sensible of their duty in this particular, because in this last Age by the unwary discourses of some, concerning the nature of this Sacrament and the danger of receiving it unworthily, such doubts and fears have been raised in the minds of men as utterly to deter many, and in a great measure to discourage almost the generality of Christians from the use of it; to the great prejudice and danger of mens souls, and the visible abatement of piety by the gross neglect of so excellent a means of our growth and improvement in it; and to the mighty scandal of our Religion, by the general disuse and contempt of so plain and solemn an Institution of our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Therefore I shall take occasion as briefly and clearly as I can to treat of these four Points.

*First.*

*First, Of the Perpetuity of this Institution; this the Apostle signifies when he saith, that by eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup, we do shew the Lord's Death till he come.* I Cor. 11. 26.

*Secondly, Of the Obligation that lies upon all Christians to a frequent observance of this Institution; this is signified in that expression of the Apostle, as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup: which expression considered and compared together with the practice of the Primitive Church, does imply an Obligation upon Christians to the frequent receiving of this Sacrament.*

*Thirdly, I shall endeavour to satisfy the Objections and Scruples which have been raised in the minds of men, and particularly of many devout and sincere Christians, to their great discouragement from their receiving this Sacrament, at least so frequently as they ought: which Objections are chiefly grounded upon what the Apostle says, Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Bloud of the Lord: and* I Cor. 11. 27.

Ver. 29. *doth eat and drink damnation to himself.*

Fourthly, What Preparation of our selves is necessary in order to our worthy receiving of this Sacrament : which will give me occasion to explain the Apostle's meaning in those Words, *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Ver. 28.

- I. I. For the Perpetuity of this Institution, implied in those Words, *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come* ; or the Words may be read imperatively and by way of Precept, *shew ye forth the Lord's Death till he come.* In the three verses immediately before, the Apostle particularly declares the Institution of this Sacrament, with the manner and circumstances of it, as he had received it not only by the hands of the Apostles, but, as the Words seem rather to intimate, by immediate Revelation from our Lord himself, ver. 23. *For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you : that the Lord Jesus in the same night that he was betrayed took Bread, and when he had given Thanks*



*Thanks he brake it, and said, take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you; this doe in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup when he had supped, saying, this Cup is the New Testament in my Bloud: this doe as often as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.* So that the Institution is in these Words, *this doe in remembrance of me.* In which words our Lord commands his Disciples after his Death to repeat these occasions of taking and breaking and eating the Bread, and of drinking of the Cup, by way of solemn Commemoration of him. Now whether this was to be done by them once only, or oftner; and whether by the Disciples only, during their lives, or by all Christians afterwards in all successive Ages of the Church, is not so certain merely from the force of these Words, *doe this in remembrance of me:* but what the Apostle adds puts the matter out of all doubt, that the Institution of this Sacrament was intended not only for the Apostles, and for that Age, but for all Christians, and for all Ages of the Christian Church; *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come: that is, untill the time of his second coming,*

which will be at the end of the World. So that this Sacrament was designed to be a standing Commemoration of the Death and Passion of our Lord till he should come to Judgment; and consequently the Obligation that lies upon Christians to the observation of it is perpetual, and shall never cease to the end of the World.

So that it is a vain conceit and mere dream of the *Enthusiasts*, concerning the *seculum Spiritus Sancti*, the Age and dispensation of the *Holy Ghost*, when, as they suppose, all humane Teaching shall cease, and all external Ordinances and Institutions in Religion shall vanish, and there shall be no farther use of them. Whereas it is very plain from the *New Testament* that Prayer, and outward Teaching, and the Use of the two Sacraments, were intended to continue among Christians in all Ages. As for Prayer, (besides our natural Obligation to this duty, if there were no revealed Religion) we are by our Saviour particularly exhorted to *watch and pray*, with regard to the day of Judgment, and in consideration of the uncertainty of the time when it shall be: And therefore this will always be a Duty incumbent upon

upon Christians till the day of Judgment, because it is prescribed as one of the best ways of Preparation for it. That outward Teaching likewise and Baptism were intended to be perpetual is no less plain, because Christ hath expressly promised to be with the Teachers of his Church in the use of these Ordinances to the end of the World, *Matth. 28. 19, 20. Go and disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and lo I am with you always to the end of the World.* Not only to the end of that particular Age, but to the end of the Gospel Age, and the consummation of all Ages, as the phrase clearly imports. And it is as plain from this Text, that the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* was intended for a perpetual Institution in the Christian Church, till the second coming of Christ, viz. his coming to Judgment: Because *St. Paul* tells us, that by these Sacramental Signs the Death of Christ is to be represented and commemorated till he comes. *Doe this in remembrance of me: For as oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come.*

And if this be the End and Use of this Sacrament, to be a solemn remembrance

of the Death and Sufferings of our Lord during his absence from us, that is, till his coming to Judgment, then this Sacrament will never be out of date till the second coming of our Lord. The consideration whereof should mightily strengthen and encourage our Faith in the hope of Eternal Life so often as we partake of this Sacrament: since our Lord hath left it to us as a memorial of himself till he come to translate his Church into Heaven, and as a sure pledge that he will come again at the end of the World and invest us in that Glory which he is now gone before to prepare for us. So that as often as we approach the Table of the Lord, we should comfort our selves with the thoughts of that blessed time when we shall eat and drink with him in his Kingdom, and shall be admitted to the great Feast of the Lamb, and to eternal Communion with God the Judge of all, and with our blessed and glorified Redeemer, and the holy Angels, and the Spirits of just men made perfect.

And the same consideration should likewise make us afraid to receive this Sacrament unworthily, without due Preparation for it, and without worthy effects of it upon our Hearts and Lives. Be-  
cause

cause of that dreadfull Sentence of condemnation which at the second coming of our Lord shall be past upon those, who by the profanation of this solemn Institution trample under foot the son of God, and contemn the blood of the Covenant; that Covenant of Grace and Mercy which God hath ratified with Mankind by the Blood of his Son. The *Apostle* tells us that *he that eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* This indeed is spoken of temporal Judgment (as I shall shew in the latter part of this Discourse,) but the *Apostle* likewise supposeth, that if these temporal Judgments had not their effect to bring men to Repentance, but they still persisted in the Profanation of this holy Sacrament, they should at last *be condemned with the World.* For as he that partaketh worthily of this Sacrament confirms his interest in the promises of the Gospel, and his Title to eternal Life; so he that receives this Sacrament unworthily, that is without due Reverence, and without fruits meet for it; nay, on the contrary, continues to live in sin whilst he commemorates the Death of Christ, *who gave himself for us that he*

*might redeem us from all iniquity, this man aggravates and seals his own Damnation, because he is guilty of the Body and Bloud of Christ, not only by the contempt of it, but by renewing in some sort the cause of his sufferings, and as it were crucifying to himself afresh the Lord of life and glory, and putting him to an open shame. And when the great Judge of the world shall appear and pass final Sentence upon men, such obstinate and impenitent wretches as could not be wrought upon by the remembrance of the dearest love of their dying Lord, nor be engaged to leave their sins by all the tyes and obligations of this holy Sacrament, shall have their portion with Pilate and Judas, with the chief Priests and Souldiers, who were the betrayers and murtherers of the Lord of life and glory; and shall be dealt withall as those who are in some sort guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord. Which severe threatening ought not to discourage men from the Sacrament, but to deter all those from their sins who think of engaging themselves to God by so solemn and holy a Covenant. It is by no means a sufficient Reason to make men to fly from the Sacrament, but certainly one of the most powerfull Arguments in  
the*



the world to make men forsake their sins; as I shall shew more fully under the *third* head of this Discourse.

II. The *Obligation* that lyes upon all Christians to the frequent observance and practice of this Institution. For though it be not necessarily implied in these Words, *as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup*; yet if we compare these Words of the *Apostle* with the usage and practice of Christians at that Time, which was to communicate in this holy Sacrament so often as they solemnly met together to worship God, they plainly suppose and recommend to us the frequent use of this Sacrament, or rather imply an obligation upon Christians to embrace all opportunities of receiving it. For the sense and meaning of any Law or Institution is best understood by the general practice which follows immediately upon it.

And to convince men of their obligation hereunto, and to ingage them to a sutable practice, I shall now endeavour with all the plainness and force of persuasion I can: And so much the more, because the neglect of it among Christians



ans is grown so general, and a great many persons from a superstitious awe and reverence of this Sacrament are by degrees fallen into a profane neglect and contempt of it.

I shall briefly mention a *threefold* Obligation lying upon all Christians to frequent Communion in this holy Sacrament; each of them sufficient of it self, but all of them together of the greatest force imaginable to engage us hereunto.

I. We are obliged in point of *indispensable duty*, and in obedience to a plain precept and most solemn institution of our blessed Saviour that great *Lawgiver*, who is able to save and to destroy, as St. James calls him: He hath bid us *doe this*. And S. Paul who declares nothing in this matter but what he tells us he received from the Lord, admonisheth us to doe it often. Now for any man that professeth himself a Christian to live in the open and continued contempt or neglect of a plain Law and Institution of *Christ* is utterly inconsistent with such a profession. To such our Lord may say as he did to the *Jews*, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and doe not the things which I say?* How far the

Ignor-

Ignorance of this institution, or the mistakes which men have been led into about it, may extenuate this neglect is another consideration. But after we know our Lord's will in this particular and have the Law plainly laid before us, there is no cloak for our sin. For nothing can excuse the wilfull neglect of a plain Institution from a downright contempt of our Saviour's Authority.

2. We are likewise obliged hereunto in point of *Interest*. The benefits which we expect to be derived and assured to us by this Sacrament are all the blessings of the new Covenant, the forgiveness of our sins, the grace and assistance of God's holy Spirit to enable us to perform the conditions of this Covenant required on our part; and the comforts of God's holy Spirit to encourage us in well-doing, and to support us under sufferings; and the glorious reward of eternal life. So that in neglecting this Sacrament we neglect our own interest and happiness, we forsake our own mercies, and judge our selves unworthy of all the blessings of the Gospel, and deprive our selves of one of the best means and advantages of confirming and conveying these blessings to

to us. So that if we had not a due sense of our *duty*, the consideration of our own *interest* should oblige us not to neglect so excellent and so effectual a means of promoting our own comfort and happiness.

3. We are likewise particularly obliged in point of *gratitude* to the carefull observance of this Institution. This was the particular thing our Lord gave in charge when he was going to lay down his life for us, *doe this in remembrance of me*. Men use religiously to observe the charge of a dying friend, and, unless it be very difficult and unreasonable, to doe what he desires: But this is the charge of our best friend (nay of the greatest friend and benefactor of all mankind) when he was preparing himself to dye in our stead and to offer up himself a sacrifice for us; to undergo the most grievous pains and sufferings for our sakes, and to yield up himself to the worst of temporal deaths that he might deliver us from the bitter pains of eternal death. And can we deny him any thing he asks of us who was going to doe all this for us? Can we deny him this? so little grievous and burthen some in it self, so infinitely

finitely beneficial to us? Had such a friend, and in such circumstances, bid us doe some great thing would we not have done it? how much more when he hath onely said, *doe this in remembrance of me*; when he hath only commended to us one of the most natural and delightfull Actions, as a fit representation and memorial of his wonderfull love to us, and of his cruel sufferings for our sakes; when he hath only enjoyned us, in a thankfull commemoration of his goodness, to meet at his Table and to remember what he hath done for us; to look upon him whom we have pierced, and to resolve to grieve and wound him no more? Can we without the most horrible ingratitude neglect this dying charge of our Sovereign and our Saviour, the great friend and lover of souls? A command so reasonable, so easie, so full of blessings and benefits to the faithfull observers of it!

One would think it were no difficult matter to convince men of their duty in this particular, and of the necessity of observing so plain an Institution of our Lord; that it were no hard thing to persuade men to their interest, and to be willing to partake of those great and manifold blessings which all Christians believe to be  
promised

promised and made good to the frequent and worthy Receivers of this Sacrament. Where then lyes the difficulty? what should be the cause of all this backwardness which we see in men to so plain, so necessary, and so beneficial a duty? The truth is, men have been greatly discouraged from this Sacrament by the unwary pressing and inculcating of two great truths; *the danger of the unworthy receiving of this holy Sacrament, and the necessity of a due preparation for it.* Which brings me to the

III. *Third Particular* I proposed, which was to endeavour to satisfy the *Objections* and *Scruples* which have been raised in the minds of men, and particularly of many devout and sincere Christians, to their great discouragement from the receiving of this Sacrament, at least so frequently as they ought. And these Objections, I told you, are chiefly grounded upon what the *Apostle* says at the 27th verse. *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* And again ver. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* Upon the mistake

mistake and misapplication of these *Texts* have been grounded *two* Objections, of great force to discourage men from this Sacrament, which I shall endeavour with all the tenderness and clearness I can to remove. *First*, That the danger of unworthy receiving being so very great, it seems the safest way not to receive at all. *Secondly*, That so much preparation and worthiness being required in order to our worthy Receiving, the more timorous sort of devout Christians can never think themselves duly enough qualified for so sacred an Action.

1. That the danger of unworthy receiving being so very great it seems the safest way wholly to refrain from this Sacrament and not to receive it at all. But this Objection is evidently of no force if there be (as most certainly there is) as great or a greater danger on the other hand, *viz.* in the neglect of this Duty: And so though the danger of unworthy receiving be avoided by not receiving, yet the danger of neglecting and contemning a plain Institution of Christ is not thereby avoided. Surely they in the *Parable* that refused to come to the marriage-feast of the King's Son and



and *made light* of that gracious invitation were at least as faulty as he who came *without a wedding garment*. And we find in the conclusion of the *Parable*, that as he was severely punished for his disrespect, so they were destroyed for their disobedience. Nay of the two it is the greater sign of contempt wholly to neglect the Sacrament, than to partake of it without some due qualification. The greatest indisposition that can be for this holy Sacrament is ones being a bad man, and he may be as bad, and is more likely to continue so, who wilfully neglects this Sacrament, than he that comes to it with any degree of reverence and preparation, though much less than he ought. And surely it is very hard for men to come to so solemn an Ordinance without some kind of religious awe upon their spirits and without some good thoughts and resolutions, at least for the present. If a man that lives in any known wickedness of life do before he receive the Sacrament set himself seriously to be humbled for his sins, and to repent of them, and to beg God's grace and assistance against them; and after the receiving of it, does continue for some time in these good resolutions, though after a while he may possibly



sibly relapse into the same sins again; this is some kind of restraint to a wicked life; and these good moods and fits of repentance and reformation are much better than a constant and uninterrupted course of sin: Even this *righteousness*, which is but *as the morning cloud and the early dew which so soon passeth away*, is better than none.

And indeed scarce any man can think of coming to the Sacrament, but he will by this consideration be excited to some good purposes, and put upon some sort of endeavour to amend and reform his life: and though he be very much under the bondage and power of evil habits, if he do with any competent degree of sincerity (and it is his own fault if he do not) make use of this excellent means and instrument for the mortifying and subduing of his lusts and for the obtaining of God's grace and assistance, it may please God by the use of these means so to abate the force and power of his lusts, and to imprint such considerations upon his mind in the receiving of this holy Sacrament and preparing himself for it, that he may at last break off his wicked course and become a good man.

But, on the other hand, as to those who neglect this Sacrament, there is hardly a  
T ny

ny thing left to restrain them from the greatest enormities of life, and to give a check to them in their evil course: nothing but the penalty of humane Laws, which men may avoid and yet be wicked enough. Heretofore men used to be restrained from great and scandalous vices by shame and fear of disgrace, and would abstain from many sins out of regard to their honour and reputation among men: But men have hardened their faces in this degenerate Age, and those gentle restraints of modesty which governed and kept men in order heretofore signifie nothing now a-days. Blushing is out of fashion, and shame is ceased from among the children of men.

But the Sacrament did always use to lay some kind of restraint upon the worst of men: and if it did not wholly reform them, it would at least have some good effect upon them for a time: If it did not make men good, yet it would make them resolve to be so, and leave some good thoughts and impressions upon their minds.

So that I doubt not but it hath been a thing of very bad consequence, to discourage men so much from the Sacrament, as the way hath been of late years: And that many men who were under some kind of check before, since they have been driven

driven away from the Sacrament have quite let loose the reins, and prostituted themselves to all manner of impiety and vice. And among the many ill effects of our past confusions, this is none of the least, That in many Congregations of this Kingdom Christians were generally dissuaded and deterred from the Sacrament, upon a pretence that they were unfit for it; and being so, they must necessarily incur the danger of unworthy receiving; and therefore they had better wholly to abstain from it. By which it came to pass that in very many Places this great and solemn Institution of the Christian Religion was almost quite forgotten, as if it had been no part of it; and the remembrance of Christ's death even lost among Christians: So that many Congregations in *England* might justly have taken up the complaint of the Woman at our Saviour's Sepulchre, *they have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.*

But surely men did not well consider what they did, nor what the consequences of it would be, when they did so earnestly dissuade men from the Sacrament. 'Tis true indeed the danger of unworthy receiving is great; but the proper inference and conclusion from

T 2

hence

hence is not that men should upon this consideration be deterred from the Sacrament, but that they should be affrighted from their sins, and from that wicked course of life which is an habitual indisposition and unworthiness. St. Paul indeed (as I observed before) truly represents, and very much aggravates the danger of the unworthy receiving of this Sacrament; but he did not deter the *Corinthians* from it, because they had sometimes come to it without due reverence, but exhorts them to amend what had been amiss and to come better prepared and disposed for the future. And therefore after that terrible declaration in the Text, *Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, he does not add, therefore let Christians take heed of coming to the Sacrament, but, let them come prepared and with due reverence, not as to a common meal, but to a solemn participation of the body and blood of Christ; but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

For, if this be a good reason to abstain from the Sacrament, for fear of performing so sacred an action in an undue manner,

manner, it were best for a bad man to lay aside all Religion and to give over the exercise of all the duties of piety, of prayer, of reading and hearing the Word of God; because there is a proportionable danger in the unworthy and unprofitable use of any of these. *The prayer of the wicked* (that is, of one that resolves to continue so) *is an abomination to the Lord.* And our *Saviour* gives us the same caution concerning hearing the Word of God; *take heed how ye hear.* And St. *Paul* tells us, that those who are not reformed by the Doctrine of the *Gospel*, it is *the favour of death*, that is deadly and damnable, to such persons.

But now will any man from hence argue, that it is best for a wicked man not to pray, not to hear or read the Word of God, lest by so doing he should endanger and aggravate his condemnation? And yet there is as much reason from this consideration to persuade men to give over praying and attending to God's Word, as to lay aside the use of the Sacrament. And it is every whit as true that he that prays unworthily and hears the Word of God unworthily, that is, without fruit and benefit, is guilty of a great contempt of God and of our blef-

fed Saviour; and by his indevout prayers and unfruitfull hearing of God's Word does further and aggravate his own damnation: I say, this is every whit as true, as that he that eats and drinks the Sacrament unworthily is guilty of a high contempt of Christ, and *eats and drinks his own Judgment*; so that the danger of the unworthy performing this so sacred an action is no otherwise a reason to any man to abstain from the Sacrament, than it is an Argument to him to cast off all Religion. He that unworthily useth or performs any part of Religion is in an evil and dangerous condition; but he that casts off all Religion plungeth himself into a most desperate state, and does certainly damn himself to avoid the danger of damnation: Because he that casts off all Religion throws off all the means whereby he should be reclaimed and brought into a better state. I cannot more fitly illustrate this matter than by this plain Similitude: He that eats and drinks intemperately endangers his health and his life, but he that to avoid this danger will not eat at all, I need not tell you what will certainly become of him in a very short space.

There



There are some conscientious persons who abstain from the Sacrament upon an apprehension that the sins which they shall commit afterwards are unpardonable. But this is a great mistake; our Saviour having so plainly declared that all manner of sin shall be forgiven men except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost; such as was that of the *Pharisees*, who as our Saviour tells us blasphemed the Holy Ghost in ascribing those great miracles which they saw him work, and which he really wrought by the Spirit of God, to the power of the Devil. Indeed to sin deliberately after so solemn an engagement to the contrary is a great aggravation of sin, but not such as to make it unpardonable. But the neglect of the Sacrament is not the way to prevent these sins; but, on the contrary, the constant receiving of it with the best preparation we can is one of the most effectual means to prevent sin for the future, and to obtain the assistance of God's grace to that end: And if we fall into sin afterwards, we may be renewed by repentance; *for we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins; and as such, is in a very lively and*



affecting manner exhibited to us in this blessed Sacrament of his body broken, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins. Can we think that the primitive Christians, who so frequently received this holy Sacrament, did never after the receiving of it fall into any deliberate sin? undoubtedly many of them did; but far be it from us to think that such sins were unpardonable, and that so many good men should because of their careful and conscientious observance of our Lord's Institution unavoidably fall into condemnation.

To draw to a conclusion of this matter: such groundless fears and jealousies as these may be a sign of a good meaning, but they are certainly a sign of an injudicious mind. For if we stand upon these Scruples, no man perhaps was ever so worthily prepared to draw near to God in any duty of Religion, but there was still some defect or other in the disposition of his mind, and the degree of his preparation. But if we prepare our selves as well as we can, this is all God expects. And for our fears of falling into sin afterwards, there is this plain answer to be given to it; that the danger of falling into sin is not prevented by

by neglecting the Sacrament, but increased : because a powerfull and probable means of preserving men from sin is neglected. And why should not every sincere Christian, by the receiving of this Sacrament and renewing his Covenant with God, rather hope to be confirmed in goodness, and to receive farther assistences of God's grace and holy Spirit to strengthen him against sin, and to enable him to subdue it; than trouble himself with fears which are either without ground, or if they are not, are no sufficient reason to keep any man from the Sacrament? We cannot surely entertain so unworthy a thought of God and our blessed Saviour, as to imagine that he did institute the Sacrament not for the furtherance of our Salvation, but as a snare, and an occasion of our ruine and damnation. This were to pervert the gracious design of God, and to turn the cup of Salvation into a cup of deadly poison to the souls of men.

All then that can reasonably be inferred from the danger of unworthy receiving is, that upon this consideration men should be quickened to come to the Sacrament with a due preparation of mind, and so much the more to fortifie their resolutions

solutions of living suitably to that holy Covenant which they solemnly renew every time they receive this holy Sacrament. This consideration ought to convince us of the absolute necessity of a good life, but not to deter us from the use of any means which may contribute to make us good. Therefore (as a learned *Divine* says very well) this Sacrament can be neglected by none but those that do not understand it, but those who are unwilling to be tyed to their duty and are afraid of being engaged to use their best diligence to keep the commandments of Christ: And such persons have no reason to fear being in a worse condition, since they are already in so bad a state. And thus much may suffice for answer to the *first Objection* concerning the great danger of unworthy receiving this holy Sacrament. I proceed to the

*Obj. 2.*

2. *Second Objection*, which was this; That so much preparation and worthiness being required to our worthy receiving, the more timorous sort of Christians can never think themselves duly enough qualified for so sacred an Action.

For

For a full Answer to this Objection, I shall endeavour briefly to clear these *three* things. *First*, That every degree of Imperfection in our preparation for this Sacrament is not a sufficient reason for men to refrain from it. *Secondly*, That a total want of a due preparation, not only in the degree but in the main and substance of it, though it render us unfit at present to receive this Sacrament, yet it does by no means excuse our neglect of it. *Thirdly*, That the proper Inference and conclusion from the total want of a due preparation is not to cast off all thoughts of receiving the Sacrament, but immediately to set upon the work of preparation that so we may be fit to receive it. And if I can clearly make out these *three* things, I hope this Objection is fully answered.

1. That every degree of Imperfection in our preparation for this Sacrament is not a sufficient reason for men to abstain from it: For then no man should ever receive it. For who is every way worthy, and in all degrees and respects duly qualified to approach the presence of God in any of the duties of his Worship and Service? Who can *wash his hands in innocency*,  
that

that so he may be perfectly fit to approach God's Altar? *There is not a man on earth that lives and sins not.* The Graces of the best men are imperfect; and every imperfection in grace and goodness is an imperfection in the disposition and preparation of our minds for this holy Sacrament: But if we do heartily repent of our sins, and sincerely resolve to obey and perform the terms of the Gospel, and of that Covenant which we entred into by Baptism, and are going solemnly to renew and confirm by our receiving of this Sacrament, we are at least in some degree and in the main qualified to partake of this holy Sacrament; And the way for us to be more fit is to receive this Sacrament frequently, that by this spiritual food of God's appointing, by *this living bread which comes down from heaven* our souls may be nourished in goodness, and new strength and virtue may be continually derived to us for the purifying of our hearts and enabling us to run the ways of God's commandments with more constancy and delight. For the way to grow in grace and to be *strengthened with all might in the inner man*, and to *abound in all the fruits of righteousness which by Christ Jesus are to the* praise

*praise and glory of God*, is with care and conscience to use those means which God hath appointed for this end: And if we will neglect the use of these means it is to no purpose for us to pray to God for his grace and assistance. We may tire our selves with our devotions and fill heaven with vain complaints, and yet by all this importunity obtain nothing at God's hand: Like lazy beggars that are always complaining and always asking, but will not work, will do nothing to help themselves and better their condition, and therefore are never like to move the pity and compassion of others. If we expect God's grace and assistance, we must work out our own Salvation in the careful use of all those means which God hath appointed to that end. That excellent degree of goodness which men would have to fit them for the Sacrament, is not to be had but by the use of it. And therefore it is a preposterous thing for men to insist upon having the end before they will use the means that may further them in the obtaining of it.

2. The total want of a due preparation, not only in the degree but in the main



main and substance of it, though it render us unfit at present to receive this Sacrament, yet does it by no means excuse our neglect of it. One fault may draw on another, but can never excuse it. It is our great fault that we are wholly unprepared, and no man can claim any benefit by his fault, or plead it in excuse or extenuation of this neglect. A total want of preparation and an absolute unworthiness is Impenitency in an evil course, a resolution to continue a bad man, not to quit his lusts and to break off that wicked course he hath lived in: But is this any excuse for the neglect of our duty that we will not fit our selves for the doing of it with benefit and advantage to our selves? A father commands his son to ask him blessing every day, and is ready to give it him; but so long as he is undutifull to him in his other actions, and lives in open disobedience, forbids him to come in his sight. He excuseth himself from asking his father blessing, because he is undutifull in other things, and resolves to continue so. This is just the case of neglecting the duty God requires, and the blessings he offers to us in the Sacrament, because we have made our selves incapable



ble of so performing the one as to receive the other; and are resolved to continue so. We will not do our duty in other things, and then plead that we are unfit and unworthy to do it in this particular of the Sacrament.

3. The proper Inference and conclusion from a total want of due preparation for the Sacrament is not to cast off all thoughts of receiving it, but immediately to set about the work of preparation, that so we may be fit to receive it. For if this be true, that they who are absolutely unprepared ought not to receive the Sacrament, nor can do it with any benefit; nay by doing it in such a manner render their condition much worse, this is a most forcible argument to repentance and amendment of life: There is nothing reasonable in this case but immediately to resolve upon a better course, that so we may be meet partakers of those holy Mysteries, and may no longer provoke God's wrath against us by the wilfull neglect of so great and necessary a duty of the Christian Religion. And we do wilfully neglect it, so long as we do wilfully refuse to fit and qualify our selves for the due and worthy

thy performance of it. Let us view the thing in a like case; A Pardon is graciously offered to a Rebel, he declines to accept it, and modestly excuseth himself because he is not worthy of it. And why is he not worthy? because he resolves to be a Rebel, and then his pardon will do him no good, but be an aggravation of his crime. Very true: and it will be no less an aggravation that he refuseth it for such a reason, and under a pretence of modesty does the most imprudent thing in the world. This is just the case; and in this case there is but one thing reasonable to be done, and that is, for a man to make himself capable of the benefit as soon as he can, and thankfully to accept of it: But to excuse himself from accepting of the benefit offered, because he is not worthy of it, nor fit for it, nor ever intends to be so, is as if a man should desire to be excused from being happy because he is resolved to play the fool and to be miserable. So that whether our want of preparation be total, or only to some degree, it is every way unreasonable: If it be in the degree only, it ought not to hinder us from receiving the Sacrament; If it be total, it ought to put us immediately upon removing.

moving the impediment, by making such preparation as is necessary to the due and worthy receiving of it. And this brings me to the

IV. *Fourth* and last thing I proposed, *viz.* What preparation of our selves is necessary in order to the worthy receiving of this Sacrament. Which I told you would give me occasion to explain the *Apistle's* meaning in the last part of the *Text*, *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* I think it very clear from the occasion and circumstances of the *Apistle's* discourse concerning the Sacrament, that he does not intend the examination of our state, whether we be Christians or not; and sincerely resolved to continue so; and consequently that he does not here speak of our habitual preparation by the resolution of a good life. This he takes for granted, that they were Christians and resolved to continue and persevere in their Christian profession: But he speaks of their actual fitness and worthiness at that time when they came to receive the Lord's Supper. And for the clearing of this matter, we must consider what it was that gave occasion to

IV.

V

this

this discourse. At the 20th verse of this  
 Chapter he sharply reproveth their irreve-  
 rent and unfutable carriage at the Lord's  
 Supper. They came to it very disorder-  
 ly, *one before another*. It was the custom  
 of Christians to meet at their *Feast of*  
*Charity*, in which they did communicate  
 with great sobriety and temperance; and  
 when that was ended they celebrated the  
 Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Now  
 among the *Corinthians* this order was bro-  
 ken: The rich met and excluded the  
 poor from this common Feast. And af-  
 ter an irregular feast (*one before another*  
 eating his own supper as he came) they  
 went to the Sacrament in great disorder;  
*one was hungry having eaten nothing at*  
*all, others were drunk, having eaten im-*  
*temperately*; and the poor were despised  
 and neglected. This the *Apostle* con-  
 demns as a great profanation of that so-  
 lemn Institution of the Sacrament; at the  
 participation whereof they behaved them-  
 selves with as little reverence as if they  
 had been met at a common supper or  
 feast. And this he calls *not discerning the*  
*Lord's body*, making no difference in  
 their behaviour between the Sacrament  
 and a common meal: which irreverent  
 and contemptuous carriage of theirs he  
 calls

calls *eating and drinking unworthily* : for which he pronounceth them *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, which were represented and commemorated in their *eating of that bread and drinking of that cup*. By which irreverent and contemptuous usage of the body and blood of our Lord, he tells them that they did incur the judgment of God ; which he calls *eating and drinking their own judgment*. For that the word *κρίσις*, which our Translatours render *damnation*, does not here signifie eternal condemnation, but a temporal judgment and chastisement in order to the prevention of eternal condemnation, is evident from what follows ; *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself* : And then he says, *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep* : That is, for this irreverence of theirs God had sent among them several diseases, of which many had dyed. And then he adds, *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged*. If we would judge our selves ; whether this be meant of the publick Censures of the Church, or our private censuring of our selves in order to our future amendment and reformation, is not certain. If of the lat<sup>r</sup>

ter, which I think most probable, then judging here is much the same with examining our selves, ver. 28. And then the Apostle's meaning is, that if we would censure and examine our selves, so as to be more carefull for the future, we should escape the judgment of God in these temporal punishments. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* But when we are judged; that is, when by neglecting thus to judge our selves we provoke God to judge us; we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world; that is, he inflicts these temporal judgments upon us to prevent our eternal condemnation. Which plainly shews, that the judgment here spoken of is not eternal condemnation. And then he concludes, *Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to eat carry for one another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment:* where the Apostle plainly shews both what was the crime of unworthy receiving, and the punishment of it. Their crime was, their irreverent and disorderly participation of the Sacrament; and their punishment was, those temporal judgments which God inflicted

flitted upon them for this their contempt of the Sacrament.

Now this being, I think, very plain; we are proportionably to understand the precept of examination of our selves before we eat of that bread and drink of that cup. But let a man examine himself; that is, consider well with himself what a sacred Action he is going about, and what behaviour becomes him when he is celebrating this Sacrament instituted by our Lord in memorial of his body and blood, that is, of his death and passion: And if heretofore he has been guilty of any disorder and irreverence (such as the Apostle here taxeth them withall) let him censure and judge himself for it, be sensible of and sorry for his fault, and be careful to avoid it for the future; and having thus examined himself, let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. This, I think, is the plain sense of the Apostle's Discourse; and that if we attend to the scope and circumstances of it, it cannot well have any other meaning.

But some will say, Is this all the preparation that is required to our worthy receiving of the Sacrament, that we take care not to come drunk to it, nor to be guilty of any irreverence and disorder in



the celebration of it? I answer in short; this was the particular unworthiness with which the *Apostle* taxeth the *Corinthians*; and which he warns them to amend, as they desire to escape the judgments of God, such as they had already felt for this irreverent carriage of theirs, so unsuitable to the holy Sacrament: He finds no other fault with them at present in this matter, though any other sort of irreverence will proportionably expose men to the like punishment. He says nothing here of their habitual preparation, by the sincere purpose and resolution of a good life answerable to the rules of the Christian Religion: This we may suppose he took for granted. However, it concerns the Sacrament no more than it does Prayer or any other religious duty. Not but that it is very true that none but those who do heartily embrace the Christian Religion and are sincerely resolved to frame their lives according to the holy rules and precepts of it, are fit to communicate in this solemn acknowledgment and profession of it. So that it is a practice very much to be countenanced and encouraged, because it is of great use, for Christians by way of preparation for the Sacrament to examine themselves in  
a lar-

a larger sense than in all probability the *Apostle* here intended: I mean, to examine our past lives and the actions of them in order to a sincere repentance of all our errors and miscarriages, and to fix us in the steady purpose and resolution of a better life: particularly, when we expect to have the forgiveness of our sins sealed to us, we should lay aside all enmity and thoughts of revenge, and heartily forgive those that have offended us, and put in practice that universal love and charity which is represented to us by this holy Communion. And to this purpose we are earnestly exhorted in the publick Office of the Communion by way of due preparation and disposition for it, *to repent us truly of our sins past, to amend our lives and to be in perfect charity with all men, that so we may be meet partakers of those holy mysteries.*

And because this work of examining our selves concerning our state and condition, and of exercising repentance towards God and charity towards men is incumbent upon us as we are Christians, and can never be put in practice more seasonably and with greater advantage than when we are meditating of this Sacrament, therefore besides our habitual

preparation by repentance and the constant endeavours of a holy life, it is a very pious and commendable custome in Christians before their coming to the Sacrament to set apart some particular time for this work of examination. But how much time every person should allot to this purpose, is matter of prudence; and as it need not, so neither indeed can it be precisely determined. Some have greater reason to spend more time upon this work, than others; I mean those whose accounts are heavier because they have long run upon the score and neglected themselves: And some also have more leisure and freedom for it, by reason of their easie condition and circumstances in the world; and therefore are obliged to allow a greater portion of Time for the exercises of piety and devotion. In general, no man ought to doe a work of so great moment and concernment slightly and perfunctorily. And in this, as in all other actions, the end is principally to be regarded. Now the end of examining our selves is to understand our state and condition, and to reform whatever we find amiss in our selves. And provided this end be obtained, the circumstances of the means are less considerable;

siderable: whether more or less time be allowed to this work it matters not so much, as to make sure that the work be thoroughly done.

And I do on purpose speak thus cautiously in this matter, because some pious persons do perhaps err on the stricter hand, and are a little superstitious on that side; insomuch that unless they can gain so much time to set apart for a solemn preparation, they will refrain from the Sacrament at that time; though otherwise they be habitually prepared. This I doubt not proceeds from a pious mind; but as the *Apostle* says in another case about the Sacrament, *shall I praise them in this? I praise them not.* For, provided there be no wilfull neglect of due preparation, it is much better to come so prepared as we can, nay I think it is our duty so to doe, rather than to abstain upon this *punctilio*. For when all is done, the best preparation for the Sacrament is the general care and endeavour of a good life: And he that is thus prepared may receive at any time when opportunity is offered, though he had no particular foresight of that opportunity. And I think in that case such a one shall do much better to receive than to refrain; because he

is

is habitually prepared for the Sacrament, though he had no time to make such actual preparation as he desired. And if this were not allowable how could Ministers communicate with sick persons at all times, or persuade others to doe it many times upon very short and sudden warning?

And indeed we cannot imagine that the primitive Christians, who received the Sacrament so frequently that for ought appears to the contrary they judged it as essential and necessary a part of their publick worship as any other part of it whatsoever, even as their Hymns and Prayers, and reading and interpreting the Word of God: I say, we cannot well conceive how they who celebrated it so constantly, could allot any more time for a solemn preparation for it, than they did for any other part of divine worship: And consequently, that the *Apostle* when he bids the *Corinthians* examine themselves could mean no more than that considering the nature and ends of this Institution they should come to it with great reverence; and reflecting upon their former miscarriages in this matter, should be carefull upon this admonition to avoid them for the future and to amend what  
had

had been amiss: which to doe, requires rather resolution and care than any long time of preparation.

I speak this, that devout persons may not be entangled in an apprehension of a greater necessity than really there is of a long and solemn preparation every time they receive the Sacrament. The great necessity that lies upon men is to live as becomes Christians, and then they can never be absolutely unprepared. Nay, I think this to be a very good preparation; and I see not why men should not be very well satisfied with it, unless they intend to make the same use of the Sacrament that many of the Papists do of Confession and Absolution, which is to quit with God once or twice a year, that so they may begin to sin again upon a new score.

But because the Examination of our selves is a thing so very usefull, and the time which men are wont to set apart for their preparation for the Sacrament is so advantageous an opportunity for the practice of it; therefore I cannot but very much commend those who take this occasion to search and try their ways, and to call themselves to a more solemn account of their actions. Because this ought  
to

to be done sometime, and I know no fitter time for it than this. And perhaps some would never find time to recollect themselves and to take the condition of their souls into serious consideration, were it not upon this solemn occasion.

The sum of what I have said is this, that supposing a person to be habitually prepared by a religious disposition of mind and the general course of a good life, this more solemn actual preparation is not always necessary: And it is better when there is an opportunity to receive without it, than not to receive at all. But the greater our actual preparation is, the better. For no man can examine himself too often, and understand the state of his soul too well, and exercise repentance, and renew the resolutions of a good life too frequently. And there is perhaps no fitter opportunity for the doing of all this, than when we approach the Lord's table, there to commemorate his death and to renew our Covenant with him to live as becomes the Gospel.

All the Reflexion I shall now make upon this Discourse, shall be from the consideration of what hath been said earnestly to excite all that profess and call themselves



elves Christians to a due preparation of themselves for this holy Sacrament, and a frequent participation of it according to the intention of our Lord and Saviour in the institution of it, and the undoubted practice of Christians in the primitive and best times, when men had more devotion and fewer scruples about their duty.

If we do in good earnest believe that this Sacrament was instituted by our Lord in remembrance of his dying love, we cannot but have a very high value and esteem for it upon that account. Methinks so often, as we read in the institution of it those words of our dear Lord, *do this in remembrance of me*, and consider what he who said them did for us, this dying charge of our best friend should stick with us and make a strong impression upon our minds: Especially if we add to these, those other words of his not long before his death, *Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend; ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you*. It is a wonderfull love which he hath expressed to us; and worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance. And all that he expects from us, by way of thankfull acknowledgment, is to celebrate the remembrance

membrance of it by the frequent participation of this blessed Sacrament. And shall this charge, laid upon us by him who laid down his life for us, lay no obligation upon us to the solemn remembrance of that unparallel'd kindness which is the fountain of so many blessings and benefits to us? It is a sign we have no great sense of the benefit when we are so unmindfull of our benefactor as to forget him days without number. The Obligation he hath laid upon us is so vastly great, not onely beyond all requital but beyond all expression, that if he had commanded us some very grievous thing we ought with all the readiness and cheerfulness in the world to have done it; how much more when he hath imposed upon us so easie a commandment, a thing of no burthen but of immense benefit? when he hath onely said to us, *Eat O friends, and drink O beloved*? when he onely invites us to his table, to the best and most delicious Feast that we can partake of on this side heaven?

If we seriously believe the great blessings which are there exhibited to us and ready to be conferred upon us, we should be so far from neglecting them, that we should heartily thank God for every opportunity

portunity he offers to us of being made partakers of such benefits. When such a price is put into our hands, shall we want hearts to make use of it? Methinks we should long with *David* (who saw but the shadow of these blessings) to be satisfied with the good things of God's house, and to draw near his altar; and should cry out with him, *O when shall I come and appear before thee? My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* And if we had a just esteem of things, we should account it the greatest infelicity and judgment in the world to be debarred of this privilege, which yet we do deliberately and frequently deprive our selves of.

We exclaim against the Church of *Rome* with great impatience, and with a very just indignation, for robbing the People of half of this blessed Sacrament, and taking from them the *cup of blessing*, the *cup of salvation*; and yet we can patiently endure for some months, nay years, to exclude our selves wholly from it. If no such great benefits and blessings belong to it, why do we complain of them for hindring us of any part of it? But if there do, why do we by our own neglect

neglect deprive our selves of the whole?

In vain do we bemoan the decay of our graces and our slow progress and improvement in Christianity, whilst we wilfully despise the best means of our growth in goodness. Well do we deserve that God should send leanness into our souls, and make them to consume and pine away in perpetual doubting and trouble, if, when God himself doth spread so bountifull a Table for us, and set before us the bread of life, we will not come and feed upon it with joy and thankfulness.



two  
and  
the  
whi  
that  
wor  
othe  
Sacr  
in w  
Scrip

## DISCOURSE

AGAINST

## TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

**C**Oncerning the *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, one of the two great positive Institutions of the Christian Religion, there are two main Points of difference between *Us* and the Church of *Rome*. One, about the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; in which they think, but are not certain, that they have the Scripture and the words of our Saviour on their side: The other, about the administration of this Sacrament to the People in both kinds; in which we are sure that we have the Scripture and our Saviour's Institution on

X

our

our side; and that so plainly, that our Adversaries themselves do not deny it.

Of the *first* of these I shall now treat, and endeavour to shew against the Church of Rome, *That in this Sacrament, there is no substantial change made of the Elements of Bread and Wine into the natural Body and Blood of Christ*; that Body which was born of the *Virgin Mary*, and suffered upon the Cross; for so they explain that hard word *Transubstantiation*.

Before I engage in this Argument, I cannot but observe what an unreasonable task we are put upon, by the bold confidence of our Adversaries, to dispute a matter of Sense; which is one of those things about which *Aristotle* hath long since pronounc'd there ought to be no dispute.

It might well seem strange if any man should write a Book, to prove that an *Egg* is not an *Elephant*, and that a *Musket-Bullet* is not a *Pike*: It is every whit as hard a case, to be put to maintain by a long Discourse, that what we see and handle and taste to be *Bread* is *Bread*, and not the *Body of a man*; and what we see and taste to be *Wine* is *Wine*, and not *Blood*: And if this evidence may not pass for sufficient without any farther proof,



**VOL. III. against Transubstantiation. 307**

proof; I do not see why any man, that hath confidence enough to do so, may not deny any thing to be what all the World sees it is; or affirm any thing to be what all the World sees it is not; and this without all possibility of being farther confuted. So that the business of *Transubstantiation* is not a controverſie of Scripture against Scripture, or of Reason against Reason, but of downright Impudence against the plain meaning of Scripture, and all the Sense and Reason of Mankind.

It is a most Self-evident Falshood; and there is no Doctrine or Proposition in the World that is of it self more evidently true, than *Transubstantiation* is evidently false: And yet if it were possible to be true, it would be the most ill-natur'd and pernicious truth in the World, because it would suffer nothing else to be true; it is like the *Roman-Catholick* Church, which will needs be the whole Christian Church, and will allow no other Society of Christians to be any part of it: So *Transubstantiation*, if it be true at all, it is all truth, and nothing else is true; for it cannot be true unless our Senses, and the Senses of all mankind be deceived about their proper objects; and

X. 2. if



if this be true and certain, then nothing else can be so; for if we be not certain of what we see, we can be certain of nothing.

And yet notwithstanding all this, there are a Company of men in the World so abandon'd and given up by God to the efficacy of delusion as in good earnest to believe this gross and palpable Errour, and to impose the belief of it upon the Christian World under no less penalties than of temporal death and eternal damnation. And therefore to undeceive, if possible, these deluded Souls, it will be necessary to examine the pretended grounds of so false a Doctrine, and to lay open the monstrous absurdity of it.

And in the handling of this Argument, I shall proceed in this plain method.

I. I shall consider the pretended grounds and reasons of the Church of *Rome* for this Doctrine.

II. I shall produce our *Objections* against it. And if I can shew that there is no tolerable ground for it, and that there are invincible Objections against it, then every man is not onely in reason excused from believing this Doctrine, but hath great cause to believe the contrary.

FIRST,

**FIRST**, I will consider the pretended grounds and reasons of the Church of Rome for this Doctrine. Which must be one or more of these *five*. Either 1<sup>st</sup>. The Authority of Scripture. Or 2<sup>ly</sup>. The perpetual belief of this Doctrine in the Christian Church, as an evidence that they always understood and interpreted our Saviour's words, *This is my body*, in this sense. Or 3<sup>ly</sup>. The Authority of the present Church to make and declare new Articles of Faith. Or 4<sup>ly</sup>. The absolute necessity of such a change as this in the Sacrament to the comfort and benefit of those who receive this Sacrament. Or 5<sup>th</sup>. To magnify the power of the Priest in being able to work so great a Miracle.

I.

1<sup>st</sup>. They pretend for this Doctrine the Authority of Scripture in those words of our Saviour, *This is my body*. Now to shew the insufficiency of this pretence, I shall endeavour to make good these two things.

1. That there is no necessity of understanding those words of our Saviour in the sense of *Transubstantiation*.

2. That there is a great deal of reason, nay that it is very absurd and unreasonable,

ble, to understand them otherwise.

*First*, That there is no necessity to understand those words of our Saviour in the sense of *Transubstantiation*. If there be any, it must be from one of these two reasons. Either because there are no figurative expressions in Scripture, which I think no man ever yet said: or else, because a Sacrament admits of no figures; which would be very absurd for any man to say, since it is of the very nature of a Sacrament to represent and exhibit some invisible grace and benefit by an outward sign and figure: And especially since it cannot be denied, but that in the institution of this very Sacrament our Saviour useth figurative expressions, and several words which cannot be taken strictly and literally. When he gave the Cup he said, *This Cup is the new Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of Sins*. Where first, the Cup is put for the *Wine* contained in the Cup; or else if the words be literally taken, so as to signifie a substantial change, it is not of the *Wine*, but of the *Cup*; and that, not into the *blood of Christ* but into the *new Testament* or *new Covenant* in his blood. Besides, that his blood is said *then* to be shed, and his body to be broken, which was

# Vol. III. against Transubstantiation, 311

was not till his Passion, which followed the Institution and first celebration of this Sacrament.

But that there is no necessity to understand our Saviour's words in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, I will take the plain concession of a great number of the most learned Writers of the Church of Rome in this Controversie. (a) *Bellarmino*, (a) *de Euch. l. 3. c. 23.* (b) *Suarez* and (c) *Vasquez* do acknowledge *Scotus* the great Schoolman to have (b) *in 3. dist. 49. Qu. 75. Sect. 2.* said that this Doctrine cannot be evidently proved from Scripture: And *Bellarmino* grants this not to be improbable; (c) *in 3. part. disp. 180. Qu. 75. art. 2. c. 15.* and *Suarez* and *Vasquez* acknowledge (d) *in Sent. 1. 4. dist. 11. Qu. 1. n. 15.* *Durandus* to have said as much. (e) *in 4. Sent. 2. 3. Quodl. 4. Q. 3.* *Cham*, another famous Schoolman, says expressly, that the Doctrine which holds the substance of the Bread and Wine to remain after consecration is neither repugnant to Reason nor to Scripture. (f) *Petrus ab Alliaco* Cardinal of Cambray says plainly, that the Doctrine of the Substance of Bread and Wine remaining after Consecration is more easie and free from absurdity, more rational, and no ways repugnant to the authority of Scripture; nay more, that for the other Doctrine, viz. of *Transubstantiation*, there is no evidence in Scripture. (g) *Gabriel Biel*, another great School- (g) *in canon. Miss. Lect. 40.*

Schoolman and Divine of their Church, freely declares, that *as to any thing express'd in the Canon of the Scriptures, a man may believe that the substance of Bread and Wine doth remain after Consecration*: and therefore he resolves the belief of *Transubstantiation* into some other Revelation, besides Scripture, which he supposeth the Church had about it. Cardinal

(h) in *A-*  
*quin.* 3.  
*part. Qu.*  
*75. art. 1.*

(h) *Cajetan* confesseth that *the Gospel doth no where express that the Bread is changed into the Body of Christ*; that we have this from the authority of the Church: nay, he goes farther, that *there is nothing in the Gospel which enforceth any man to understand these words of Christ, this is my body, in a proper and not a metaphorical sense*; but *the Church having understood them in a proper sense they are to be so explained*; Which words in the Roman

(i) *Agid.*  
*Conink. de*  
*Sacram. Q.*

*75. art. 1.*  
*n. 13.*

(k) *de Sa-*  
*cram. l. 2.*  
*c. 3.*

(l) *Loc.*  
*Theolog.*  
*l. 3. c. 3.*

(m) *contra*  
*captiv. Ba-*  
*bylon. c. 10.*  
*n. 2.*

Edition of *Cajetan* are expunged by order of Pope (i) *Pius V.* Cardinal (k) *Contarenius*, and (l) *Melchior Canus* one of the best and most judicious Writers that Church ever had, reckon this Doctrine among those which are not so expressly found in Scripture. I will add but one more, of great authority in the Church, and a reputed Martyr, (m) *Fisher* Bishop of *Rocheſter* who ingenuously confesseth

feleth that in the words of the Institution there is not one word from whence the true presence of the flesh and blood of Christ in our Mass can be proved: So that we need not much contend that this Doctrine hath no certain foundation in Scripture, when this is so fully and frankly acknowledged by our Adversaries themselves.

Secondly, If there be no necessity of understanding our Saviour's words in the sense of *Transubstantiation*, I am sure there is a great deal of reason to understand them otherwise. Whether we consider the like expressions in Scripture; as where our Saviour says he is *the door*, and *the true Vine* (which the Church of Rome would mightily have triumph'd in, had it been said, *this is my true body*.) And so likewise where the Church is said to be *Christ's body*; and the *Rock* which followed the *Israelites* to be *Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 4. *They drank of that rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ*: All which and innumerable more like expressions in Scripture every man understands in a figurative, and not in a strictly literal and absurd sense. And it is very well known, that in the *Hebrew Language* things



things are commonly said to be that which they do signifie and represent; and there is not in that Language a more proper and usual way of expressing a thing to signifie so and so, than to say that it is so and so. Thus *Joseph* expounding *Pharaoh's* dream to him, *Gen. 41. 26.* Says, *the seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears of corn are seven years*, that is, they signified or represented seven years of plenty; and so *Pharaoh* understood him, and so would any man of sense understand the like expressions; nor do I believe that any sensible man, who had never heard of *Transubstantiation* being grounded upon these words of our Saviour, *this is my body*, would upon reading the institution of the Sacrament in the Gospel ever have imagin'd any such thing to be meant by our Saviour in those words; but would have understood his meaning to have been, *this Bread signifies my Body, this Cup signifies my Blood*; and this which you see me now do, do ye hereafter for a *Memorial* of me: But surely it would never have enter'd into any man's mind to have thought that our Saviour did literally hold himself in his hand, and give away himself from himself with his own hands.

Or



# Vol.III. against Transubstantiation. 315

Or whether we compare these words of our Saviour with the ancient Form of the Passover used by the Jews from *Ex-  
ra's* time, as (n) *Justin Martyr* tells us, *(n) Dialog. cum Tryp. p 297. Edit. Paris. 1639.*  
 ὅτι τὸ πάσχα ἐστὶν ὁ ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ καταλύσις  
 ἡμῶν, this Passover is our Saviour and our  
 refuge: not that they believed the Pas-  
 chal Lamb to be substantially changed  
 either into God their Saviour who deli-  
 vered them out of the Land of *Egypt*, or  
 into the *Messias* the Saviour whom they  
 expected and who was signified by it;  
 But this Lamb which they did eat did  
 represent to them and put them in mind  
 of that Salvation which God wrought  
 for their Fathers in *Egypt*, when by the  
 slaying of a Lamb and sprinkling the  
 blood of it upon their doors their first-  
 born were passed over and spared; and  
 did likewise foreshew the Salvation of the  
*Messias, the Lamb of God that was to take  
 away the Sins of the world.*

And nothing is more common in all  
 Languages than to give the name of the  
 thing signified to the Sign. As the deli-  
 very of a Deed or Writing under hand  
 and Seal is call'd a conveyance or making  
 over of such an Estate, and it is really  
 so; not the delivery of mere wax and  
 parchment, but the conveyance of a real  
 Estate;

Estate; as truly and really to all effects and purposes of Law, as if the very material houses and lands themselves could be and were actually delivered into my hands: In like manner the names of the things themselves made over to us in the new Covenant of the Gospel between God and man, are given to the Signs or Seals of that Covenant. By *Baptism* Christians are said to be made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, *Heb. 6. 4.* And by the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* we are said to *communicate* or to be made *partakers of the Body of Christ* which was broken, and of his *Bloud* which was shed for us, that is, of the real benefits of his death and passion. And thus *St. Paul* speaks of this *Sacrament*, *1 Cor. 10. 16.* *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the bloud of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* But still it is bread, and he still calls it so, *v. 17.* *For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are partakers of that one bread.* The Church of *Rome* might, if they pleased, as well argue from hence that all Christians are substantially changed first into Bread, and then into the natural Body of Christ by their participation of the *Sacrament*, be-  
cause

# Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 317

cause they are said thereby to be *one bread and one body*. And the same Apostle in the next Chapter, after he had spoken of the consecration of the Elements still calls them the *Bread and the Cup*, in three verses together, *As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup*, v. 26. *Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily*, v. 27. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of that cup*, v. 28. And our Saviour himself when he had said, *this is my bloud of the new Testament*, immediately adds, \* *but I say unto you, I* <sup>\* Matth.</sup> *will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the Vine, untill I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom*, that is, not till after his resurrection, which was the first step of his exaltation into the Kingdom given him by his Father, when the Scripture tells us he did eat and drink with his Disciples. But that which I observe from our Saviour's words is, that after the consecration of the *Cup* and the delivering of it to his Disciples to drink of it, he tells them that he would thenceforth drink no more of that fruit of the Vine, which he had now drank with them, till after his Resurrection. From whence it is plain that it was the fruit of the Vine, real

real wine, which our Saviour drank of and communicated to his Disciples in the Sacrament.

Besides, if we consider that he celebrated this Sacrament before his Passion, it is impossible these words should be understood literally of the natural body and blood of Christ; because it was *his body broken* and *his blood shed* which he gave to his Disciples, which if we understand literally of his natural body broken and his blood shed; then these words, *this is my body which is broken, and this is my blood which is shed*, could not be true, because his Body was then whole and unbroken, and his blood not then shed; nor could it be a *propitiatory Sacrifice* (as they affirm this Sacrament to be) unless they will say that propitiation was made before Christ suffer'd: And it is likewise impossible that the Disciples should understand these words literally, because they not onely plainly saw that what he gave them was *Bread* and *Wine*, but they saw likewise as plainly that it was not his Body which was given, but his Body which gave that which was given; not his body *broken* and his blood *shed*, because they saw him alive at that very time and beheld his body whole and unpierc'd; and therefore

therefore they could not understand these words literally : If they did, can we imagine that the Disciples, who upon all other occasions were so full of questions and objections, should make no difficulty of this matter ? nor so much as ask our Saviour, *how* can these things be ? that they should not tell him, we see this to be Bread and that to be Wine, and we see thy Body to be distinct from both ; we see thy Body not broken, and thy Bloud not shed.

From all which it must needs be very evident, to any man that will impartially consider things, how little reason there is to understand those words of our Saviour, *this is my body*, and *this is my bloud*, in the sense of *Transubstantiation* ; nay on the contrary, that there is very great reason and an evident necessity to understand them otherwise. I proceed to shew,

2<sup>ly</sup>. That this Doctrine is not grounded upon the *perpetual belief of the Christian Church*, which the Church of Rome vainly pretends as an evidence that the Church did always understand and interpret our Saviour's words in this sense.

To manifest the groundlessness of this pretence, I shall, 1. shew by plain testimony of the *Fathers* in several Ages, that  
this

this Doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian Church. 2. I shall shew the time and occasion of its coming in, and by what degrees it grew up and was establish'd in the *Roman Church*. 3. I shall answer their great pretended Demonstration that this always was and must have been the constant belief of the Christian Church.

1. I shall shew by plain Testimonies of the *Fathers* in several Ages, for above five hundred years after Christ, that this Doctrine was not the belief of the ancient Christian Church. I deny not but that the *Fathers* do, and that with great reason, very much magnifie the wonderfull mystery and efficacy of this Sacrament, and frequently speak of a great Supernatural change made by the divine benediction; which we also readily acknowledge. They say indeed, that the Elements of Bread and Wine do by the divine blessing become to us the Body and Blood of Christ: But they likewise say that the names of the things signified are given to the Signs; that the Bread and Wine do still remain in their proper nature and substance, and that they are turn'd into the substance of our Bodies; that the Body of Christ in the Sacrament



# Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 341

is not his natural Body, but the sign and figure of it; not that Body which was crucified, nor that Blood which was shed upon the Cross; and that it is impious to understand the *eating of the flesh of the Son of man* and *drinking his blood* literally: all which are directly opposite to the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* and utterly inconsistent with it. I will select but some few Testimonies of many which I might bring to this purpose.

I begin with *Justin Martyr*, who says expressly, that \* *our Blood and Flesh are* \* *Apol. 2. p.*  
*nourished by the conversion of that food* 98. Edit.  
 which we receive in the *Eucharist*: But *Paris.*  
*that cannot be the natural body and blood* 1636.  
 of Christ, for no man will say that *that*  
 is converted into the nourishment of our  
 bodies.

The *Second* is \* *Irenæus*, who speaking \* *Lib. 4.*  
 of this Sacrament says, that the *bread* c. 34  
*which is from the earth receiving the divine*  
*invocation is now no longer common bread,*  
*but the Eucharist (or Sacrament) con-*  
*sisting of two things, the one earthly, the*  
*other heavenly.* He says it is no longer com-  
 mon bread, but after invocation or conse-  
 cration it becomes the Sacrament, that is,  
 bread sanctified, consisting of two things  
 an earthly and a heavenly; the earthly  
 Y thing



\* Lib. 5.  
c. 2.

thing is bread, and the heavenly is the divine blessing which by the invocation or consecration is added to it. And \* elsewhere he hath this passage, *when therefore the cup that is mix'd (that is, of Wine and Water) and the bread that is broken receives the word of God, it becomes the Eucharist of the blood and body of Christ, of which the substance of our flesh is increased and consists*: but it that which we receive in the Sacrament do nourish our bodies, it must be bread and wine, and not the natural body and blood of Christ. There is another remarkable Testimony of *Irenæus*, which though it be not now extant in those *works* of his which remain, yet hath been preserv'd by \* *Oecumenius*, and it is this; when (says he) *the Greeks had taken some Servants, of the Christian Catechumens (that is, such as had not been admitted to the Sacrament) and afterwards urged them by violence to tell them some of the secrets of the Christians, these Servants having nothing to say that might gratify those who offered violence to them, except onely that they had heard from their Masters that the divine Communion was the blood and body of Christ, they thinking that it was really blood and flesh, declar'd as much to those that questioned them.*

\* Comment. in  
1 Pet. c. 3.

them. The Greeks taking this as if it were really done by the Christians, discovered it to others of the Greeks; who hereupon put Sanctus and Blandina to the torture to make them confess it. To whom Blandina boldly answered, How would they endure to do this, who by way of exercise (or abstinence) do not eat that flesh which may lawfully be eaten? By which it appears that this which they would have charg'd upon Christians, as if they had literally eaten the flesh and blood of Christ in the Sacrament, was a false accusation which these Martyrs denied, saying they were so far from that that they for their part did not eat any flesh at all.

The next is *Tertullian*, who proves against *Marcion* the Heretique that the Body of our Saviour was not a mere phantasm and appearance, but a real Body, because the Sacrament is a figure and image of his Body; and if there be an image of his body he must have a real body, otherwise the Sacrament would be an image of an image. His words are these, \* *the bread which our Saviour took* \* Advers. Marcionem. l. 4. p. 571. Edit. Rigalt. Paris. 1634.  
and distributed to his Disciples he made his own body, saying this is my body, that is, the image or figure of my body. But it could not have been the figure of his body, if there had not been a true and real body.

And arguing against the *Scepticks* who denied the certainty of sense he useth this Argument: That if we question our senses we may doubt whether our Blessed Saviour were not deceived in what he heard, and saw, and touched. \* *He might*

\* *Lib. de Anima, p. 319.*

(says he) *be deceived in the voice from heaven, in the smell of the ointment with which he was anointed against his burial, and in the taste of the wine which he consecrated in remembrance of his blood.* So that it seems we are to trust our senses, even in the matter of the Sacrament; and if that be true, the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is certainly false.

\* *Edit. Hu- etii.*

*Origen* in his \* *Comment on Matth. 15.* speaking of the Sacrament hath this passage, *That food which is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught, which none surely will say of the Body of Christ.* And afterwards he adds by way of explication, *it is not the matter of the bread, but the word which is spoken over it, which profiteth him that worthily eateth the Lord; and this (he says) he had spoken concerning the typical and Symbolical body.* So that the matter of bread remaineth in the Sacrament, and this *Origen* calls the *typical and Symbolical* body

body of Christ; and it is not the natural body of Christ which is there eaten, for the food eaten in the Sacrament, as to that of it which is material, goeth into the belly and is cast out into the draught. This testimony is so very plain in the Cause that *Sextus Senensis* suspects this place of *Origen* was depraved by the Heretiques. *Cardinal Perron* is contented to allow it to be *Origen's*, but rejects his testimony because he was accused of Heresie by some of the Fathers, and says he talks like a Heretique in this place. So that with much ado this testimony is yielded to us. The same Father in his *Homilies upon Leviticus* speaks thus, \* *Cap. 1a.*  
*There is also in the New Testament a letter which kills him who doth not Spiritually understand those things which are said; for if we take according to the Letter that which is said, EXCEPT TE EAT MY FLESH AND DRINK MY BLOOD, this Letter kills. And this also is a killing Testimony, and not to be answered but in Cardinal Perron's way, by saying he talks like a Heretique.*

*St. Cyprian* hath a whole Epistle \* to \* *Ep. 63.*  
*Cecilius*, against those who gave the Communion in Water only without Wine mingled with it; and his main argument against them is this, that the blood of

*Christ with which we are redeemed and quickned cannot seem to be in the Cup when there is no Wine in the Cup by which the Blood of Christ is represented: and afterwards he says, that contrary to the Evangelical and Apostolical Doctrine water was in some places offer'd (or given) in the Lord's Cup, which (says he) alone cannot express (or represent) the blood of Christ. And lastly he tells us, that by water the people is understood, by Wine the blood of Christ is shewn (or represented) but when in the Cup water is mingled with Wine the people is united to Christ. So that according to this Argument Wine in the Sacramental Cup is no otherwise chang'd into the Blood of Christ than the Water mixed with it is changed into the People, which are said to be united to Christ.*

I omit many others, and pass to St. Austin in the fourth Age after Christ. And I the rather insist upon his Testimony, because of his eminent esteem and authority in the Latin Church; and he also calls the Elements of the Sacrament the figure and sign of Christ's Body and blood. In his Book against *Adimantus* the Manichee we have this expression, \* our Lord did not doubt to say, *this is my Body, when he gave the Sign of his Body.* And

\* Ang.

Tom. 6. p.

187: Edit.

Basil. 1569.

in

in his explication of the ninth Psalm,  
 speaking of Judas whom our Lord ad-  
 mitted to his last Supper, in which (says  
 he) † he commended and delivered to his † Emarrat.  
 Disciples the figure of his Body; Lan- in Psal.  
 guage which would now be censur'd for Tom. 8. p.  
 Heresie in the Church of Rome. Indeed 16.  
 he was never accus'd of Heresie, as Cardi-  
 nal Perron says Origen was, but he talks as  
 like one as Origen himself. And in his  
 Comment on the 98 Psalm speaking of the  
 offence which the Disciples took at that  
 saying of our Saviour, *except ye eat the  
 flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood,*  
*&c.* he brings in our Saviour speaking  
 thus to them, *ye must understand Spiritu- || Id. Tom.*  
 ally what I have said unto you; ye are 9 p. 1105.  
 not to eat this body which ye see, and to  
 drink that blood which shall be shed by those  
 that shall crucifie me. I have commended  
 a certain Sacrament to you, which being  
 Spiritually understood will give you life.  
 What more opposite to the Doctrine of  
 Transubstantiation, than that the Disciples  
 were not to eat that Body of Christ  
 which they saw, nor to drink that blood  
 which was shed upon the Cross, but that  
 all this was to be understood spiritually  
 and according to the nature of a Sacra-  
 ment? For *that body* he tells us is not



here but in heaven, in his Comment upon these words, *me ye have not always.*

\* *Id. Traß.* \* He speaks (says he) of the presence of his body: ye shall have me according to my providence, according to Majesty and invisible grace; but according to the flesh which the word assumed, according to that which was born of the Virgin Mary, ye shall not have me: therefore because he conversed with his Disciples forty days, he is ascended up into heaven and is not here.

† *Id. Tom.*  
2. p. 93.

In his 23<sup>d</sup>. Epistle; † if the Sacrament (says he) had not some resemblance of those things whereof they are Sacraments, they would not be Sacraments at all; but from this resemblance they take for the most part the names of the things which they represent. Therefore as the Sacrament of the body of Christ is in some manner or sense Christ's body, and the Sacrament of his blood is the blood of Christ; So the Sacrament of faith (meaning Baptism) is faith. Upon which words of St. Austin there is this remarkable Gloss in their own Canon Law; || the heavenly Sacrament which truly represents the flesh of Christ is called the body of Christ; but improperly: whence it is said, that after a manner, but not according to the truth of the

|| *De Consecr. dist. 2.*  
*Hoc est.*



the thing but the Mystery of the thing signified; So that the meaning is, it is called the body of Christ, that is, it signifies the body of Christ. And if this be St. Austin's meaning, I am sure no Protestant can speak more plainly against Transubstantiation. And in the ancient Canon of the Mass, before it was chang'd in compliance with this new Doctrine, it is expressly call'd a Sacrament, a Sign an Image and a Figure of Christ's body. To which I will add that remarkable passage of St. Austin cited by \* Gratian, that as we receive the similitude of his death in Baptism, so we may also receive the likeness of his flesh and blood; that so neither may truth be wanting in the Sacrament, nor Pagans have occasion to make us ridiculous for drinking the blood of one that was slain.

I will mention but one Testimony more of this Father, but so clear a one as it is impossible any man in his wits that had believed Transubstantiation could have uttered. It is in his Treatise \* de Doctrina Christiana; where laying down several Rules for the right understanding of Scripture, he gives this for one. If (says he) the speech be a precept forbidding some heinous wickedness or crime, or commanding

\* De consecrat. dist. 2. Sect. Vtrum.

\* Lib 3. Tom. 3 p. 53.

ing us to do good, it is not figurative; but if it seem to command any heinous wickedness or crime, or to forbid that which is profitable and beneficial to others, it is figurative. For example, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you: This seems to command a heinous wickedness and crime, therefore it is a figure; commanding us to communicate of the passion of our Lord, and with delight and advantage to lay up in our memory that his flesh was crucified and wounded for us. So that, according to St. Austin's best skill in interpreting Scripture, the literal eating of the flesh of Christ and drinking his blood would have been a great impiety; and therefore the expression is to be understood figuratively; not as Cardinal Perron would have it, only in opposition to the eating of his flesh and blood in the gross appearance of flesh and blood, but to the real eating of his natural body and blood under any appearance whatsoever: For St. Austin doth not say, this is a Figurative speech wherein we are commanded really to feed upon the natural body and blood of Christ under the species of bread and wine, as the Cardinal would understand him; for then the speech would be literal and

and not figurative: But he says, this is a figurative speech wherein we are commanded Spiritually to feed upon the remembrance of his Passion.

To these I will add but *three* or *four* Testimonies more in the *two* following Ages.

The first shall be of *Theodoret*, who speaking of that \* Prophecy of *Jacob* \* Gen. 49. 11. concerning our Saviour, *he washed his garments in Wine and his clothes in the bloud of grapes*, hath these words, † *as we call* † Dialog. 1. *the mystical fruit of the Vine* (that is, the Wine in the Sacrament) *after consecration the bloud of the Lord, so he (viz. Jacob) calls the bloud of the true Vine (viz. of Christ) the bloud of the grape*; but the bloud of Christ is not literally and properly but onely figuratively the bloud of the grape, in the same sense as he is said to be the true Vine; and therefore the Wine in the Sacrament after consecration is in like manner not literally and properly but figuratively the bloud of Christ. And he explains this afterwards, saying, *that our Saviour changed the names, and gave to his Body the name of the Symbol or Sign, and to the Symbol or Sign the name of his Body*; thus when he had call'd himself *the Vine*, he call'd the Symbol or Sign

*Sign his blood*; so that in the same sense that he call'd himself the Vine, he call'd the Wine, which is the Symbol of his blood, his blood: *For*, says he, *he would have those who partake of the divine mysteries not to attend to the nature of the things which are seen, but by the change of names to believe the change which is made by grace*; for he who call'd that which by nature is a body wheat and bread, and again likewise call'd himself the Vine, he honour'd the Symbols with the name of his body and blood: not changing nature but adding grace to nature. Where you see he says expressly, that when he call'd the Symbols or Elements of the Sacrament, viz. *Bread and Wine* his *Body and Blood*, he made no change in the nature of the things, onely added grace to nature, that is, by the Divine grace and blessing he rais'd them to a Spiritual and Supernatural virtue and efficacy.

The *Second* is of the same Theodoret in his second Dialogue between a *Catholique*, under the name of *Orthodoxus*, and an *Heretique* under the name of *Eranistes*: who maintaining that the Humanity of Christ was chang'd into the substance of the Divinity (which was the Heresie of *Eutyches*) he illustrates the matter by

this

this Similitude, *As*, says he, *the Symbols of the Lord's body and bloud are one thing before the invocation of the Priest, but after the invocation are changed and become another thing; So the body of our Lord after his ascension is changed into the divine substance.* But what says the Catholique Orthodoxus to this? why, he talks just like one of Cardinal Perron's Heretiques, *Thou art*, says he, *caught in thy own net: because the mystical Symbols after consecration do not pass out of their own nature; for they remain in their former substance, figure and appearance and may be seen and handled even as before.* He does not onely deny the outward figure and appearance of the Symbols to be chang'd, but the nature and substance of them, even in the proper and strictest sense of the word substance; and it was necessary so to do, otherwise he had not given a pertinent answer to the similitude urg'd against him.

The next is one of their own Popes, *Gelasius*, who brings the same Instance against the *Eutychians* \* surely, says he, *the Sacraments which we receive of the body and bloud of our Lord are a divine thing, so that by them we are made partakers of a divine nature, and yet it ceaseth not to be*  
the

\*Biblioth.  
Patr. Tom.

the substance or nature of Bread and Wine; and certainly the image and resemblance of Christ's body and blood are celebrated in the action of the mysteries, that is, in the Sacrament. To make this Instance of any force against the *Eutychians*, who held that the body of Christ upon his ascension ceas'd and was chang'd into the substance of his Divinity, it was necessary to deny that there was any substantial change in the Sacrament of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. So that here is an infallible authority, one of their own Popes expressly against *Transubstantiation*.

The last Testimony I shall produce is of *Facundus* an *African* Bilhop, who lived in the 6th Century. Upon occasion of justifying an expression of one who had said that *Christ also received the adoption of Sons*, he reasons thus. \* *Christ* vouchsafed to receive the Sacrament of adoption both when he was circumcised and baptized: And the Sacrament of Adoption may be called adoption, as the Sacrament of his body and blood, which is in the consecrated bread and cup, is by us called his body and blood: nor that the bread, says he, is properly his body and the cup his blood

\* *Facund.*  
p. 144. edit.  
*Paril.*  
1676.

bloud, but because they contain in them the mysteries of his body and bloud; hence also our Lord himself called the blessed bread and cup which he gave to his Disciples his body and bloud. Can any man alter this believe, that it was then, and had ever, been, the universal and received Doctrine of the Christian Church, that the bread and wine in the Sacrament are substantially changed into the proper and natural body and bloud of Christ?

By these plain Testimonies which I have produced, and I might have brought a great many more to the same purpose, it is I think evident beyond all denial that *Transubstantiation* hath not been the perpetual belief of the Christian Church. And this likewise is acknowledged by many great and learned men of the Roman Church. (a) *Scotus* acknowledgeth, <sup>(a) In Sent. l. 4. Dist. 11. Q. 3.</sup> that this Doctrine was not always thought necessary to be believed, but that the necessity of believing it was consequent to that Declaration of the Church made in the Council of *Lateran* under Pope *Innocent* the III. And (b) *Durandus* freely <sup>(b) In Sent. l. 4. dist. 11. q. 1. n. 15.</sup> discovers his inclination to have believed the contrary, if the Church had not by that determination obliged men to believe it. (c) *Tonstal* Bishop of *Durham* also yields, <sup>(c) de Eu- char. l. 1. that p. 146.</sup>



(d) In 1. E-  
pist. ad Co-  
rinth c. 7.  
citante e-  
tiam Sal-  
merone,  
Tom. 9.  
Tract. 16.  
p. 108.

(e) De He-  
ref. l. 8.

that before the Lateran Council men were at liberty as to the manner of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. And (d) Erasmus, who lived and died in the communion of the Roman Church, and than whom no man was better read in the ancient Fathers, doth confess that it was late before the Church defined Transubstantiation, unknown to the Ancients both name and thing. And (e) Alphonsus a Castro says plainly, that concerning the Transubstantiation of the bread into the body of Christ, there is seldom any mention in the ancient Writers. And who can imagine that these learned men would have granted the ancient Church and Fathers to have been so much Strangers to this Doctrine, had they thought it to have been the perpetual belief of the Church? I shall now in the

Second place, give an account of the particular time and occasion of the coming in of this Doctrine, and by what steps and degrees it grew up and was advanced into an Article of Faith in the Romish Church. The Doctrine of the corporal presence of Christ was first started upon occasion of the Dispute about the Worship of Images, in opposition whereto the Synod of Constantinople about the year DCCCL

did

did argue thus, That our Lord having left us no other image of himself but the Sacrament, in which the substance of bread is the image of his body, we ought to make no other image of our Lord. In answer to this Argument the second Council of Nice, in the year DCCLXXXVII did declare, that the Sacrament after Consecration *is not the image and antitype* of Christ's body and bloud, but is *properly* his body and bloud. So that the *corporal presence of the body of Christ in the Sacrament* was first brought in to support the *stupid worship of Images*: And indeed it could never have come in upon a more proper occasion, nor have been applied to a fitter purpose.

And here I cannot but take notice how well this agrees with \* *Bellarmino's* Ob- \* *De Eu-*  
servation, that *none of the Ancients who charist. l.*  
*wrote of Heresies, hath put this error* *i. c. i.*  
(viz. of denying *Transubstantiation*) in  
his Catalogue; nor did any of the Ancients  
dispute against this error for the first 600  
years. Which is very true, because there  
could be no occasion then to dispute a-  
gainst those who denied *Transubstantiati-*  
*on*; since, as I have shewn, this Doc-  
trine was not in being, unless among the  
*Eutychian* Heretiques, for the first 600  
Z years

† *Ibid.*

years and more. But † Bellarmine goes on and tells us, that the first who call'd in question the truth of the body of the Lord in the Eucharist were the *ICONOMACHI* (the opposers of Images) after the year DCC in the Council of Constantinople; for these said there was one image of Christ instituted by Christ himself, viz. the bread and wine in the Eucharist, which represents the body and blood of Christ: Wherefore from that time the Greek Writers often admonish us that the Eucharist is not the figure or image of the body of the Lord, but his true body, as appears from the VII. Synod; which agrees most exactly with the account which I have given of the first rise of this Doctrine, which began with the corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament and afterwards proceeded to Transubstantiation.

And as this was the first occasion of introducing this Doctrine among the Greeks, so in the Latin or Roman Church Paschasius Radbertus, first a Monk, and afterwards Abbat of Corbey, was the first broacher of it in the year DCCCXVIII.

And for this, besides the Evidence of History, we have the acknowledgment of two very Eminent Persons in the Church of Rome, Bellarmine and Sirmondus, who

do

# Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 339

do in effect confess that this *Paschasius* was the first who wrote to purpose upon this Argument. \* *Bellarmino* in these words, *This Authour was the first who* \* De Scrip-  
tor. Eccles. *both seriously and copiously written concerning the truth of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist: And † Sirmondus in these, † In vita* † Paschasii. *he so first explained the genuine sense of the Catholique Church, that he opened the way to the rest who afterwards in great numbers wrote upon the same Argument: But though Sirmondus is pleased to say that he onely first explain'd the sense of the Catholique Church in this Point, yet it is very plain from the Records of that Age which are left to us, that this was the first time that this Doctrine was broached in the Latin Church; and it met with great opposition in that Age, as I shall have occasion hereafter to shew. For Rabanus Maurus Arch-Bishop of Mentz about the year DCCCXLVII reciting the very words of *Paschasius* wherein he had deliver'd this Doctrine, hath this remarkable passage concerning the novelty of it; || Some, says he, of late, not having a right* || Epist. ad  
Heribaldum. c. 33. *opinion concerning the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, have said that this is the body and blood of our Lord which was born of the Virgin Mary, and in*

which our Lord suffered upon the Cross and rose from the dead: which error, says he, we have oppos'd with all our might. From whence it is plain, by the Testimony of one of the greatest and most learned Bishops of that Age, and of eminent reputation for Piety, that what is now the very Doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning the Sacrament, was then esteem'd an Error broach'd by some particular Persons, but was far from being the generally receiv'd Doctrine of that Age. Can any one think it possible, that so eminent a Person in the Church both for piety and learning, could have condemn'd this Doctrine as an Error and a Novelty, had it been the general Doctrine of the Christian Church, not only in that but in all former Ages; and no censure pass'd upon him for that which is now the great burning Article in the Church of Rome, and esteem'd by them one of the greatest and most pernicious Heresies?

Afterwards in the year MLIX, when Berengarius in France and Germany had rais'd a fresh opposition against this Doctrine, he was compell'd to recant it by Pope Nicholas and the Council at Rome, in these words, \* *that the bread and wine* which

\* Gratian.  
de conse-  
crac. di-

# Vol.III. against Transubstantiation. 341

which are set upon the Altar, after the <sup>stin. 2.</sup> consecration are not onely the Sacrament, <sup>Lanfranc. de corp & sang. Do-</sup> but the true body and bloud of our Lord <sup>mini. 6. 5.</sup> Jesus Christ; and are sensibly, not onely in <sup>Gait-</sup> the Sacrament but in truth, handled and <sup>mund. de</sup> broken by the hands of the Priest, and <sup>Sacram.</sup> ground or bruised by the teeth of the faith- <sup>l. 1. Alger. de Sacram.</sup> full. But it seems the Pope and his Coun- <sup>l. 1. c. 19.</sup> cil were not then skilfull enough to express themselves rightly in this matter; for the Gloss upon the Canon Law say expressly, † that unless we understand these † Gloss. Decret. de consecrat. dist. 2. in cap. Ego Berengarius. words of BERENGARIUS (that is in truth of the Pope and his Council) in a sound sense, we shall fall into a greater Heresie than that of BERENGARIUS; for we do not make parts of the body of Christ. The meaning of which Gloss I cannot imagine, unless it be this, that the Body of Christ, though it be in truth broken, yet it is not broken into parts (for we do not make parts of the body of Christ,) but into wholes: Now this new way of breaking a Body, not into parts but into wholes (which in good earnest is the Doctrine of the Church of Rome) though to them that are able to believe Transubstantiation it may for any thing I know appear to be sound sense, yet to us that cannot believe so it appears to be solid non-sense.

About XX years after, in the year MLXXIX Pope Gregory the VII<sup>th</sup> began to be sensible of this absurdity; and therefore in another Council at Rome made Berengarius to recant in another Form, *\* Waldens. viz. \* that the bread and wine which are*  
*Form 2. 5.* placed upon the Altar, are substantially  
 13. changed into the true and proper and quick-  
 ning flesh and bloud of our Lord Jesus  
 Christ, and after consecration are the true  
 body of Christ, which was born of the Vir-  
 gin, and which being offered for the Salva-  
 tion of the World did hang upon the Cross,  
 and sits on the right hand of the Father.

So that from the first starting of this Doctrine in the second Council of Nice in the year DCCLXXXVII, till the Council under Pope Gregory the VII<sup>th</sup> in the year MLXXIX, it was almost three hundred years that this Doctrine was contested, and before this mishapen Monster of Transubstantiation could be lick'd into that Form in which it is now settled and establish'd in the Church of Rome. Here then is a plain account of the first rise of this Doctrine, and of the several steps whereby it was advanced by the Church of Rome into an Article of Faith. I come now in the

Third



*Third* place, to answer the great pretended *Demonstration* of the impossibility that this *Doctrine*, if it had been new, should ever have come in, in any Age, and been received in the Church; and consequently it must of necessity have been the perpetual belief of the Church in all Ages: For if it had not always been the Doctrine of the Church, whenever it had attempted first to come in there would have been a great stir and bustle about it, and the whole Christian World would have rose up in opposition to it. But we can shew no such time when first it came in, and when any such opposition was made to it, and therefore it was always the Doctrine of the Church. This *Demonstration* Monsieur *Arnauld*, a very learned Man in France, pretends to be unanswerable: whether it be so or not, I shall briefly examine. And

*First*, we do assign a punctual and very likely time of the first rise of this Doctrine, about the beginning of the *ninth* Age; though it did not take firm root nor was fully settled and establish'd till towards the end of the *eleventh*. And this was the most likely time of all other, from the beginning of Christianity, for so gross an Errour to appear; it being,

by the confession and consent of their own *Historians*, the most dark and dismal time that ever happened to the Christian Church, both for *Ignorance*, and *Superstition*, and *Vice*. It came in together with *Idolatry*, and was made use of to support it: A fit prop and companion for it. And indeed what *tares* might not the Enemy have sown in so dark and long a *Night*; when so considerable a part of the Christian World was lull'd asleep in profound Ignorance and Superstition? And this agrees very well with the account which our *Saviour* himself gives in the *Parable* of the *Tares*, of the springing up of Errours and Corruptions in the Field of the Church. \* *While the men slept* the Enemy did his work in the Night, so that when they were awake they wondered how and whence the *tares* came; but being sure they were there, and that they were not sown at first, they concluded *the Enemy had done it*.

\* Matth.  
13. 24.

*Secondly*, I have shewn likewise that there was *considerable opposition* made to this *Error* at its first coming in. The general Ignorance and gross Superstition of that Age rendered the generality of people more quiet and secure, and disposed them to receive any thing that came under

under a pretence of mystery in Religion and of greater reverence and devotion to the Sacrament, and that seemed any way to countenance the worship of *Images*, for which at that time they were zealously concern'd. But notwithstanding the security and passive temper of the People, the men most eminent for piety and learning in that Time made great resistance against it. I have already named *Rabanus* Arch-Bishop of *Mentz*, who oppos'd it as an Errour lately sprung up and which had then gained but upon some few persons. To whom I may add *Heribaldus* Bishop of *Auxerres* in *France*, *Is. Scorius Erigena*, and *Ratramnus* commonly known by the name of *Bertram*, who at the same time were employed by the Emperour *Charles the Bald* to oppose this growing Errour, and wrote learnedly against it. And these were the eminent men for learning in that time. And because Monsieur *Arnauld* will not be satisfied unless there were some stir and bustle about it, *Bertram* in his Preface to his Book tells us, that they who according to their several opinions talked differently about the mystery of *Christ's* body and blood were divided by no small Schism.

Thirdly,

*Thirdly*, Though for a more clear and satisfactory answer to this pretended *Demonstration* I have been contented to untie this knot, yet I could without all these pains have cut it. For suppose this Doctrine had silently come in and without opposition, so that we could not assign the particular time and occasion of its first Rise; yet if it be evident from the Records of former Ages, for above D. years together, that this was not the ancient belief of the Church; and plain also, that this Doctrine was afterwards received in the *Roman Church*, though we could not tell how and when it came in, yet it would be the wildest and most extravagant thing in the world to set up a pretended *Demonstration* of Reason against plain Experience and matter of Fact. This is just *Zeno's Demonstration* of the impossibility of motion against *Diogenes* walking before his Eyes. For this is to undertake to prove that impossible to have been, which most certainly was. Just thus the *Servants* in the *Parable* might have demonstrated that the *tares* were *wheat*, because they were sure none but good seed was sown at first, and no man could give any account of the punctual time when any *tares* were sown,

town, or by whom; and if an Enemy had come to do it, he must needs have met with great resistance and opposition; but no such resistance was made, and therefore there could be no *tares* in the *field*, but that which they call'd *tares* was certainly *good wheat*. At the same rate a man might demonstrate that *our King*, his *Majesty of great Britain*, is not return'd into *England*, nor restor'd to his *Crown*; because there being so great and powerfull an *Army* possess'd of his *Lands*, and therefore obliged by interest to keep him out, it was impossible he should ever come in without a great deal of fighting and bloudshed: but there was no such thing, therefore he is not return'd and restor'd to his *Crown*. And by the like kind of Demonstration one might prove that the *Turk* did not invade *Christendom* last year, and besiege *Vienna*; because if he had, the most *Christian King*, who had the greatest *Army* in *Christendom* in a readiness, would certainly have employed it against him; but Monsieur *Arnauld* certainly knows, no such thing was done: And therefore according to his way of Demonstration, the *matter of fact*, so commonly reported and believed, concerning the

the *Turks Invasion of Christendom* and *besieging Vienna* last year, was a perfect mistake. But a man may demonstrate till his head and heart ake, before he shall ever be able to prove that which certainly is, or was, never to have been. For of all sorts of impossibles nothing is more evidently so, than to make that which hath been not to have been. All the reason in the world is too weak to cope with so tough and obstinate a difficulty. And I have often wonder'd how a man of Monsieur *Arnauld's* great wit and sharp Judgment could prevail with himself to engage in so bad and baffled a Cause; or could think to defend it with so wooden a *Dagger* as his *Demonstration of Reason* against certain *Experience* and *matter of Fact*: A thing if it be possible, of equal absurdity with what he pretends to demonstrate, *Transubstantiation* it self. I proceed to the

*Third* pretended Ground of this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*; and that is, *The Infallible Authority of the present Church to make and declare new Articles of Faith*. And this in truth is the ground into which the most of the learned men of their Church did heretofore, and many do still resolve their belief of this

**Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 349**

this Doctrine: And, as I have already shewn, do plainly say that they see no sufficient reason, either from *Scripture* or *Tradition*, for the belief of it: And that they should have believed the contrary had not the determination of the Church obliged them otherwise.

But if this Doctrine be obtruded upon the world merely by virtue of the Authority of the *Roman Church*, and the Declaration of the *Council* under Pope *Gregory* the VII<sup>th</sup>. or of the *Lateran Council* under *Innocent* the III. then it is a plain Innovation in the Christian Doctrine, and a new Article of Faith impos'd upon the Christian world. And if any Church hath this power, the Christian Faith may be enlarged and changed as often as men please; and that which is no part of our Saviour's Doctrine, nay, any thing though never so absurd and unreasonable, may become an Article of Faith obliging all Christians to the belief of it, whenever the Church of *Rome* shall think fit to stamp her Authority upon it: which would make Christianity a most uncertain and endless thing.

The *Fourth* pretended ground of this Doctrine is, *the necessity of such a change as this in the Sacrament to the comfort and benefit*



*benefit of those who receive it.* But there is no colour for this, if the thing be rightly consider'd: Because the comfort and benefit of the Sacrament depends upon the blessing annexed to the Institution. And as *Water in Baptism*, without any substantial change made in that Element, may by the Divine blessing accompanying the Institution be effectual to the washing away of Sin, and Spiritual Regeneration; So there can no reason in the world be given why the Elements of *Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper* may not, by the same Divine blessing accompanying this Institution, make the worthy receivers partakers of all the Spiritual comfort and benefit designed to us thereby, without any substantial change made in those Elements, since our Lord hath told us, that *verily the flesh profiteth nothing.* So that if we could do so odd and strange a thing as to eat the very natural flesh and drink the blood of our Lord, I do not see of what greater advantage it would be to us than what we may have by partaking of the Symbols of his body and blood as he hath appointed *in remembrance of him.* For the Spiritual efficacy of the Sacrament doth not depend upon the nature of the thing received,

**VOLUME against Transubstantiation. 351**

ceived, supposing we receive what our Lord appointed, and receive it with a right preparation and disposition of mind, but upon the supernatural blessing that goes along with it, and makes it effectual to those spiritual ends for which it was appointed.

The *Fifth* and last pretended ground of this Doctrine is, *to magnifie the power of the Priest in being able to work so great a Miracle.* And this with great pride and pomp is often urg'd by them as a transcendent instance of the Divine wisdom, to find out so admirable a way to raise the power and reverence of the Priest; that he should be able every day, and as often as he pleases, by repeating a few words to work so miraculous a change, and (as they love most absurdly and blasphemously to speak) *to make God himself.*

But this is to pretend to a power above that of God himself, for he did not, nor cannot make himself, nor do any thing that implies a contradiction, as *Transubstantiation* evidently does in their pretending *to make God.* For to make that which already is, and to make that *now* which *always* was, is not onely vain and trifling if it could be done, but impossible because it implies a contradiction.

And

And what if after all *Transubstantiation*, if it were possible and actually wrought by the Priest, would yet be no Miracle? For there are two things necessary to a Miracle, that there be a supernatural effect wrought, and that this effect be evident to sense. So that though a supernatural effect be wrought, yet if it be not evident to sense it is to all the ends and purposes of a Miracle as if it were not; and can be no testimony or proof of any thing, because it self stands in need of another Miracle to give testimony to it and to prove that it was wrought. And neither in Scripture, nor in profane Authors, nor in common use of speech, is any thing call'd a Miracle but what falls under the notice of our senses: A *Miracle* being nothing else but a *supernatural effect evident to sense*, the great end and design whereof is to be a sensible proof and conviction to us of something that we do not see.

And for want of this Condition, *Transubstantiation*, if it were true, would be no Miracle. It would indeed be very *supernatural*, but for all that it would not be a *Sign* or *Miracle*: For a *Sign* or *Miracle* is always a thing sensible, otherwise it could be no *Sign*. Now that  
such

such a change as is pretended in *Transubstantiation* should really be wrought, and yet there should be no sign and appearance of it, is a thing very wonderful, but not to sense; for our senses perceive no change, the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament to all our senses remaining just as they were before: And that a thing should remain to all appearance just as it was, hath nothing at all of wonder in it: we wonder indeed when we see a strange thing done, but no man wonders when he sees nothing done. So that *Transubstantiation*, if they will needs have it a Miracle, is such a Miracle as any man may work that hath but the confidence to face men down that he works it, and the fortune to be believed: And though the Church of *Rome* may magnify their Priests upon account of this Miracle, which they say they can work every day and every hour, yet I cannot understand the reason of it; for when this great work (as they call it) is done, there is nothing more appears to be done than if there were no Miracle: Now such a Miracle as to all appearance is no Miracle I see no reason why a Protestant Minister, as well as a Popish Priest, may not work as often as he pleases;

A a

ses ;

ses; or if he can but have the patience to let it alone, it will work it self. For surely nothing in the world is easier than to let a thing be as it is, and by speaking a few words over it to make it just what it was before. Every man, every day, may work ten thousand such Miracles.

And thus I have dispatch'd the *First* part of my Discourse, which was to consider the pretended grounds and *Reasons* of the Church of *Rome* for this Doctrine, and to shew the weakness and insufficiency of them. I come in the

SECOND place, to produce our *Objections* against it. Which will be of so much the greater force, because I have already shewn this Doctrine to be destitute of all Divine warrant and authority, and of any other sort of Ground sufficient in reason to justify it. So that I do not now object against a Doctrine which hath a fair probability of Divine Revelation on its side, for that would weigh down all objections, which did not plainly overthrow the probability and credit of its Divine Revelation: But I object against a Doctrine by the mere will and Tyranny of men impos'd upon the belief of Christians, without any evidence

Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 355

evidence of *Scripture*, and against all the evidence of *Reason* and *Sense*.

The Objection I shall reduce to these two Heads. *First*, the infinite scandal of this Doctrine to the Christian Religion. And *Secondly*, the monstrous and insupportable absurdity of it.

*First*, *The infinite scandal of this Doctrine to the Christian Religion.* And that upon these four accounts. 1. Of the stupidity of this Doctrine. 2. The real barbarousness of this Sacrament and Rite of our Religion upon supposition of the truth of this Doctrine. 3. Of the cruel and bloody consequences of it. 4. Of the danger of Idolatry; which they are certainly guilty of, if this Doctrine be not true.

1. Upon account of *the stupidity of this Doctrine.* I remember that *Tully*, who was a man of very good sense, instanteth in the conceit of *eating God* as the extremity of madness, and so stupid an apprehension as he thought no man was ever guilty of. \* *When we call*, says he, \* *De Nat. the fruits of the earth Ceres, and wine Deorum.* *Bacchus*, we use but the common language; <sup>l. 3.</sup> but do you think any man so mad as to believe that which he eats to be God? It seems he could not believe that so extra-

\* Dionys.  
Carthuf.  
in 4. dist.  
10. art. 1.

vagant a folly had ever entred into the mind of man. It is a very severe saying of *Averroes* the *Arabian* Philosopher (who lived after this Doctrine was entertained among *Christians*) and ought to make the Church of *Rome* blush, if she can; \* *I have travell'd*, says he, *over the world*; and have found divers Sects; but so sottish a Sect or Law I never found, as is the Sect of the *Christians*; because with their own teeth they devour their God whom they worship. It was great stupidity in the People of *Israel* to say, Come let us make us Gods, but it was civilly said of them, Let us make us Gods that may go before us, in comparison of the Church of *Rome*, who say, Let us make a God that we may eat him. So that upon the whole matter I cannot but wonder that they should chuse thus to expose Faith to the contempt of all that are endued with Reason. And to speak the plain truth, the Christian Religion was never so horribly exposed to the scorn of Atheists and Infidels, as it hath been by this most absurd and senseless Doctrine. But thus it

† 2 Thess. 2. 10. was foretold that † the Man of Sin should come with Power and Signs and Lying Miracles, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness, with all the Legerdemon

and



and *jugling* tricks of falshood and imposture; amongst which this of *Transubstantiation*, which they call a *Miracle*, and we a *Cheat*, is one of the chief: And in all probability those common *jugling* words of *hocus pocus*, are nothing else but a corruption of *hoc est corpus*, by way of ridiculous imitation of the Priests of the Church of *Rome* in their *trick* of *Transubstantiation*. Into such contempt by this foolish Doctrine and pretended Miracle of theirs have they brought the most sacred and venerable Mystery of our Religion.

2. It is very scandalous likewise upon account of the real *barbarousness* of this Sacrament and Rite of our Religion, upon supposition of the truth of this Doctrine. Literally to eat the flesh of the Son of man and to drink his blood, St. Augustine, as I have shewed before, declares to be a great *Impiety*. And the impiety and barbarousness of the thing is not in truth extenuated, but onely the appearance of it, by its being done under the *Species of Bread and Wine*: For the thing they acknowledge is really done, and they believe that they verily eat and drink the natural flesh and blood of Christ. And what can any man do more unwor-

thily towards his Friend? How can he possibly use him more barbarously, than to feast upon his living flesh and blood? It is one of the greatest wonders in the world, that it should ever enter into the minds of men to put upon our Saviour's words, so easily capable of a more convenient sense and so necessarily requiring it, a meaning so plainly contrary to Reason, and Sense, and even to Humanity it self. Had the ancient Christians owned any such Doctrine, we should have heard of it from the Adversaries of our Religion in every page of their Writings; and they would have desired no greater advantage against the Christians than to have been able to hit them in the teeth with their feasting upon the natural flesh and blood of their Lord, and their God, and their best Friend. What endless triumphs would they have made upon this Subject? And with what confidence would they have set the cruelty used by Christians in their *Sacrament*, against their God *Saturn's* eating his own Children, and all the cruel and bloody Rites of their Idolatry? But that no such thing was then objected by the *Heathens* to the *Christians*, is to a wise man instead of a thousand Demonstrations that no such Doctrine was then believed.

3. It is scandalous also upon account of the *cruel and bloody consequences* of this Doctrine; so contrary to the plain Laws of Christianity, and to one great end and design of this Sacrament, which is to unite Christians in the most perfect love and charity to one another: Whereas this Doctrine hath been the occasion of the most barbarous and bloody Tragedies that ever were acted in the World. For this hath been in the Church of *Rome* the great *burning Article*; and as absurd and unreasonable as it is, more Christians have been murther'd for the denial of it than perhaps for all the other Articles of their Religion. And I think it may generally pass for a true observation that all Sects are commonly most hot and furious for those things for which there is least Reason; for what men want of Reason for their opinions, they usually supply and make up in Rage. And it was no more than needed to use this severity upon this occasion; for nothing but the cruel fear of death could in probability have driven so great a part of mankind into the acknowledgment of so unreasonable and senseless a Doctrine.

O blessed Saviour! thou best Friend and greatest lover of mankind, who can imagine thou didst ever intend that men should kill one another for not being able to believe contrary to their senses; for being unwilling to think, that thou shouldst make one of the most horrid and barbarous things that can be imagin'd a main Duty and principal Mystery of thy Religion; for not flattering the pride and presumption of the Priest who says he can make God, and for not complying with the folly and stupidity of the People who are made to believe that they can eat him:

4. Upon account of the danger of *Idolatry*; which they are certainly guilty of if this Doctrine be not true, and such a change as they pretend be not made in the Sacrament; for if it be not, then they worship a Creature instead of the Creatour God blessed for ever. But such a change I have shewn to be impossible; or if it could be, yet they can never be certain that it is, and consequently are always in danger of *Idolatry*: And that they can never be certain that such a change is made, is evident; because, according to the expresse determination of the Council of *Trent*, that depends upon  
the

the mind and *intention of the Priest*, which cannot certainly be known but by Revelation, which is not pretended in this case. And if they be mistaken about this change, through the knavery or crossness of the Priest who will not *make God* but when he thinks fit, they must not think to excuse themselves from Idolatry because they intended to worship God and not a Creature; for so the *Persians* might be excus'd from Idolatry in worshipping the *Sun*, because they intend to worship God and not a Creature; and so indeed we may excuse all the Idolatry that ever was in the world, which is nothing else but a mistake of the Deity, and upon that mistake a worshipping of something as God which is not God.

II. Besides the infinite scandal of this Doctrine upon the accounts I have mentioned, *the monstrous absurdities* of it make it insupportable to any Religion. I am very well assur'd of the grounds of Religion in general, and of the Christian Religion in particular; and yet I cannot see that the foundations of any revealed Religion, are strong enough to bear the weight of so many and so great absurdities as this Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* would

would load it withall. And to make this evident, I shall not insist upon those gross contradictions, of the same Body being in so many several places at once; of our Saviour's giving away himself with his own hands to every one of his Disciples, and yet still keeping himself to himself; and a thousand more of the like nature: but to shew the absurdity of this Doctrine I shall onely ask these few Questions.

1. Whether any man have, or ever had greater evidence of the truth of any Divine Revelation than every man hath of the falshood of *Transubstantiation*? Infidelity were hardly possible to men, if all men had the same evidence for the Christian Religion which they have against *Transubstantiation*, that is, the clear and irresistible evidence of sense. He that can once be brought to contradict or deny his senses, is at an end of certainty; for what can a man be certain of if he be not certain of what he sees? In some circumstances our senses may deceive us, but no Faculty deceives us so little and so seldom: And when our senses do deceive us, even that error is not to be corrected without the help of our senses.

2. Sup-

2. Supposing this Doctrine had been delivered in Scripture in the very same words that it is decreed in the Council of *Trent*, by what clearer evidence or stronger Argument could any man prove to me that such words were in the Bible than I can prove to him that bread and wine after consecration are bread and wine still? He could but appeal to my eyes to prove such words to be in the Bible, and with the same reason and justice might I appeal to several of his senses to prove to him that the bread and wine after consecration are bread and wine still.

3. Whether it be reasonable to imagine that God should make that a part of the Christian Religion which shakes the main external evidence and confirmation of the whole? I mean the Miracles which were wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, the assurance whereof did at first depend upon the certainty of sense. For if the senses of those who say they saw them were deceived, then there might be no Miracles wrought; and consequently it may justly be doubted whether that kind of confirmation which God hath given to the Christian Religion would be strong enough to prove it, supposing *Transubstantiation* to be a part of it: Because every



every man hath as great evidence that *Transubstantiation* is false, as he hath that the Christian Religion is true. Suppose then *Transubstantiation* to be part of the Christian Doctrine, it must have the same confirmation with the whole, and that is Miracles: But of all Doctrines in the world it is peculiarly incapable of being proved by a Miracle. For if a Miracle were wrought for the proof of it, the very same assurance which any man hath of the truth of the Miracle he hath of the falsehood of the Doctrine, that is, the clear evidence of his Senses. For that there is a Miracle wrought to prove *that what he sees in the Sacrament is not bread but the body of Christ*, there is onely the evidence of sense; and there is the very same evidence to prove *that what he sees in the Sacrament is not the body of Christ but bread*. So that here would arise a new Controversie, whether a man should rather believe his Senses giving testimony against the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, or bearing witness to a Miracle wrought to confirm that Doctrine; there being the very same evidence against the truth of the Doctrine, which there is for the truth of the Miracle: And then the Argument for *Transubstantiation* and the Objection against

4.  
are to

Vol. III. against Transubstantiation. 365

gainst it would just balance one another ; and consequently *Transubstantiation* is not to be proved by a Miracle, because that would be, *to prove to a man by something that he sees, that he doth not see what he sees.* And if there were no other evidence that *Transubstantiation* is no part of the Christian Doctrine, this would be sufficient, that what proves the one doth as much overthrow the other ; and that Miracles which are certainly the best and highest external proof of Christianity are the worst proof in the world of *Transubstantiation*, unless a man can renounce his senses at the same time that he relies upon them. For a man cannot believe a Miracle without relying upon sense, nor *Transubstantiation* without renouncing it. So that never were any two things so ill coupled together as the Doctrine of Christianity and that of *Transubstantiation*, because they draw several ways, and are ready to strangle one another : For the main evidence of the Christian Doctrine, which is Miracles, is resolved into the certainty of sense, but this evidence is clear and point-blank against *Transubstantiation*.

4. And *Lastly*, I would ask what we are to think of the Argument which our Savi-

Saviour used to convince his Disciples after his Resurrection that his Body was really risen, and that they were not deluded by a Ghost or Apparition? Is it a necessary and conclusive Argument or not?

\*Luke 24.

38, 39.

*\* And he said unto them, why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my self; for a Spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* But now if we suppose with the Church of Rome the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* to be true, and that he had instructed his Disciples in it just before his death, strange thoughts might justly have risen in their hearts, and they might have said to him; Lord, it is but a few days ago since thou didst teach us not to believe our senses, but directly contrary to what we saw, viz. that the bread which thou gavest us in the Sacrament, though we saw it and handled it and tasted it to be bread, yet was not bread, but thine own natural body; and now thou appealest to our senses to prove that this is thy body which we now see. If seeing and handling be an unquestionable evidence that things are what they appear to our senses, then we were deceived before in the Sacrament; and if they be not, then we are not

not

### Vol.III. *against* Transubstantiation. 367

not sure now that this is thy body which we now see and handle, but it may be perhaps bread under the appearance of flesh and bones; just as in the Sacrament, that which we saw and handled and tasted to be bread was thy flesh and bones under the form and appearance of bread. Now upon this supposition, it would have been a hard matter to have quieted the thoughts of the Disciples: For if the Argument which our Saviour used did certainly prove to them that what they saw and handled was his body, his very natural flesh and bones, because they saw and handled them, (which it were impious to deny) it would as strongly prove that what they saw and received before in the Sacrament was not the natural body and blood of *Christ*, but real bread and wine: And consequently, that according to our Saviour's arguing after his Resurrection they had no reason to believe *Transubstantiation* before. For that very Argument by which our Saviour proves the reality of his body after his Resurrection doth as strongly prove the reality of bread and wine after Consecration. But our Saviour's Argument was most infallibly good and true, and therefore the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is undoubtedly false.

Upon

Upon the whole matter I shall only say this, that some other Points between us and the Church of *Rome* are managed with some kind of wit and subtilty, but this of *Transubstantiation* is carried out by mere dint of impudence and facing down of Mankind.

And of this the more discerning persons of that Church are of late grown so sensible that they would now be glad to be rid of this odious and ridiculous Doctrine. But the Council of *Trent* hath rivitted it so fast into their Religion, and made it so necessary and essential a Point of their belief, that they cannot now part with it if they would; it is like a Millstone hung about the neck of Popery which will sink it at the last.

And though some of their greatest Wits, as Cardinal *Perron*, and of late Monsieur *Arnauld*, have undertaken the defence of it in great Volumes; yet it is an absurdity of that monstrous and massy weight, that no humane authority or wit are able to support it: It will make the very Pillars of *St. Peter's* crack, and requires more Volumes to make it good than would fill the *Vatican*.

And

ments

And now I would apply my self to the poor deluded People of that Church; if they were either permitted by their Priests, or durst venture without their leave, to look into their Religion and to examine the Doctrines of it. *Consider, and shew your selves men.* Do not suffer your selves any longer to be led blind-fold, and by an implicit Faith in your Priests, into the belief of nonsense and contradiction. Think it enough and too much to let them rook you of your money for pretended Pardons and counterfeit Reliques, but let not the Authority of any Priest or Church persuade you out of your Senses. Credulity is certainly a fault as well as Infidelity: and he who said, *blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed*, hath no-where said, *blessed are they that have seen and yet have not believed*, much less, *blessed are they that believe directly contrary to what they see.*

To conclude this Discourse. By what hath been said upon this Argument it will appear, with how little truth, and reason, and regard to the interest of our common Christianity, it is so often said by our Adversaries, that there are as good arguments for the belief of *Transubstantiation*

as of the Doctrine of the *Trinity*: When they themselves do acknowledge with us that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* is grounded upon the Scriptures, and that according to the interpretation of them by the consent of the ancient Fathers: But their Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* I have plainly shewn to have no such ground, and that this is acknowledged by very many learned men of their own Church. And this Doctrine of theirs being first plainly proved by us to be destitute of all Divine Warrant and Authority, our Objections against it from the manifold contradictions of it to Reason and Sense are so many Demonstrations of the falshood of it. Against all which they have nothing to put in the opposite Scale but the Infallibility of their Church, for which there is even less colour of proof from Scripture than for *Transubstantiation* it self. But so fond are they of their own Innovations and Errours, that rather than the Dictates of their Church, how groundless and absurd soever, should be call'd in question; rather than not have their will of us in imposing upon us what they please, they will overthrow any Article of the Christian Faith,



Vol.III. *against* Transubstantiation. 371

Faith, and shake the very foundations of our common Religion: A clear evidence that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Mother, since she can be so well contented that Christianity should be destroyed rather than the Point in question should be decided against her.

---

B b 2

The

---

faul, und make the very foundation of  
our common Religion: A clear evidence  
that the Church of Rome is not the true  
Mother, since she can be so well con-  
futed that Christianity should be de-  
stroyed rather than the point in question  
should be decided against her.

The

B. P. C.

If it  
ch

T  
Israe

THE  
Protestant Religion

Vindicated, from the Charge of  
Singularity and Novelty:

IN A  
SERMON

Preached before the  
KING

At WHITE-HALL,

April the 2d. 1680.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

*If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord,  
chuse you this day whom you will serve.*

THESE are the words of *Joshua*; who,  
after he had brought the People of  
*Israel* thorough many difficulties and

hazards into the quiet possession of the promised land, like a good Prince and Father of his Country was very sollicitous, before his death, to lay the firmest foundation he could devise of the future happiness and prosperity of that People in whose present settlement he had, by the blessing of God, been so successfull an instrument.

And because he knew no means so effectual to this end, as to confirm them in the Religion and Worship of the true God, who had by so remarkable and miraculous a Providence planted them in that good Land: he summons the people together, and represents to them all those Considerations that might engage them and their posterity for ever, to continue in the true Religion. He tells them what God had already done for them, and what he had promised to do more, if they would be faithfull to him: And on the other hand, what fearful calamities he had threatned, and would certainly bring upon them, in case they should transgress his Covenant, and go and serve other Gods. And after many Arguments to this purpose, he concludes with this earnest Exhortation at the 14th. verse, *Now therefore fear the Lord,*

*Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the Gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord.*

And to give the greater weight and force to this Exhortation, he do's by a very eloquent kind of insinuation as it were once more set them at liberty, and leave them to their own election: It being the nature of man to stick more stedfastly to that which is not violently imposed, but is our own free and deliberate choice: *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve.*

Which words offer to our consideration these following Observations.

1. *It is here supposed that a Nation must be of some Religion or other. Joshua do's not put this to their choice, but takes it for granted.*

2. *That though Religion be a matter of choice, yet it is neither a thing indifferent in it self, nor to a good Governour, what Religion his people are of. Joshua do's not put it to them as if it were an indifferent matter whether they served God or Idols; he had sufficiently declared before which of these was to be preferred,*

B b 4

3. *The*



3. *The true Religion may have several prejudices and objections against it: If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, intimating that upon some accounts, and to some persons, it may appear so.*

4. *That the true Religion hath those real advantages on its side, that it may safely be referr'd to any considerate mans choice.* And this seems to be the true Reason why Joshua refers it to them; Not that he thought the thing indifferent, but because he was fully satisfied that the truth and goodness of the one above the other was so evident, that there was no danger that any prudent man should make a wrong choice, *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve;* intimating, that the plain difference of the things in competition would direct them what to chuse.

5. *The Example of Princes and Governors hath a very great influence upon the people in matters of Religion.* This I collect from the Context: And Joshua was sensible of it; and therefore though he firmly believed the true Religion to have those advantages that would certainly recommend it to every impartial mans judgment, yet knowing that the multitude are easily imposed upon and led

into

into error, he thought fit to encline and determine them by his own example, and by declaring his own peremptory resolution in the case, *Chuse you this day whom you will serve; as for me, I and my house will serve the Lord.* Laws are a good security to Religion; but the Example of Governours is a living Law, which secretly overrules the minds of men, and bends them to a compliance with it,

----- *Non sic inflectere sensus  
Humanos edicta valent, ut vita Regentis.*

The Lives and Actions of Princes have usually a greater sway upon the minds of the People than their Laws.

All these Observations are I think very natural, and very considerable. I shall not be able to speak to them all; but shall proceed so far as the time and your patience will give me leave.

First, *It is here supposed that a Nation must be of some Religion or other.* Joshua do's not put it to their choice, whether they would worship any Deity at all. That had been too wild and extravagant a supposition, and which it is likely in those

I.



those days had never entered into any mans mind. But he takes it for granted that all people will be of some Religion; and then offers it to their consideration which they would pitch upon, *Chuse you this day whom you will serve, whether the Gods which your fathers served, &c.*

Religion is a thing to which men are not only formed by education and custom, but, as *Tully* says, *Quo omnes duc naturâ vehimur*, It is that to which we are all carried by a natural inclination: which is the true Reason why some Religion or other hath so universally prevailed in all Ages and places of the world.

The temporal felicity of men, and the ends of Government can very hardly, if at all, be attained without Religion. Take away this, and all Obligations of Conscience cease: and where there is no obligation of Conscience, all security of Truth and Justice and mutual confidence among men is at an end. For why should I repose confidence in that man, why should I take his word, or believe his promise, or put any of my interests and concerns into his power, who hath no other restraint upon him but that of humane Laws, and is at liberty in his own mind and principles to do whatever

ho

he judgeth to be expedient for his interest, provided he can but do it without danger to himself? So that declared Atheism and Infidelity doth justly bring men under a jealousy and suspicion with all mankind: And every wise man hath reason to be upon his guard against those, from whom he hath no cause to expect more justice and truth and equity in their dealings than he can compel them to by the mere dint and force of Laws. For by declaring themselves free from all other obligations they give us fair warning what we are to expect at their hands, and how far we may trust them. Religion is the strongest band of humane Society; and God so necessary to the welfare and happiness of mankind, as it could not have been more, if we could suppose the Being of God himself to have been purposely designed and contrived for the benefit and advantage of men: So that very well may it be taken for granted, that a Nation must be of some Religion or other.

Secondly, *Though Religion be a matter of our choice, yet it is neither a thing indifferent in it self, nor to a good Governour, what Religion his people are of.* Notwithstanding

II.

standing the supposition of the Text, *Joshua* doth not leave them at liberty whether they will serve God or Idols; but by a very Rhetorical Scheme of Speech endeavours to engage them more firmly to the worship of the true God.

To countenance and support the true Religion, and to take care that the people be instructed in it, and that none be permitted to debauch and seduce men from it, properly belongs to the Civil Magistrate. This power the Kings of *Israel* always exercised, not only with allowance, but with great approbation and commendation from God himself. And the case is not altered since Christianity: The better the Religion is, the better it deserves the countenance and support of the Civil Authority. And this Power of the Civil Magistrate in matters of Religion was never called in question, but by the *Enthusiasts* of these later times: And yet among these, every Father and Master of a Family claims this Power over his Children and Servants, at the same time that they deny it to the Magistrate over his Subjects. But I would fain know where the difference lyes. Hath a Master of a Family more power over those under his Government than the Magistrate hath?

hath? No man ever pretended it: Nay, so far is it from that, that the natural Authority of a Father may be, and often is, limited and restrained by the Laws of the Civil Magistrate. And why then may not a Magistrate exercise the same power over his Subjects in matters of Religion, which every Master challengeth to himself in his own Family, that is, to establish the true worship of God in such manner and with such circumstances as he thinks best, and to permit none to affront it, or to seduce from it those that are under his care. And to prevent all misunderstandings in this matter, I do not hereby ascribe any thing to the Magistrate that can possibly give him any pretence of right to reject God's true Religion, or to declare what he pleases to be so, and what Books he pleases to be *Canonical* and the *Word of God*; and consequently to make a false Religion so current by the stamp of his Authority, as to oblige his Subjects to the profession of it: Because he who acknowledgeth himself to derive all his Authority from God, can pretend to none against Him. But if a false Religion be established by Law, the case here is the same as in all other Laws that are sinfull in the matter of them, but

but yet made by a lawfull Authority; in this case the Subject is not bound to profess a false Religion, but patiently to suffer for the constant profession of the true.

And to speak freely in this matter, I cannot think (till I be better inform'd, which I am always ready to be) that any pretence of Conscience warrants any man, that is not extraordinarily commission'd as the Apostles and first Publishers of the Gospel were, and cannot justify that Commission by Miracles as they did, to affront the establish'd Religion of a Nation (though it be false) and openly to draw men off from the profession of it in contempt of the Magistrate and the Law: All that persons of a different Religion can in such a case reasonably pretend to, is to enjoy the private liberty and exercise of their own Conscience and Religion; for which they ought to be very thankfull, and to forbear the open making of Profelytes to their own Religion, (though they be never so sure that they are in the right) till they have either an extraordinary Commission from God to that purpose, or the Providence of God make way for it by the permission or connivance of the Magistrate. Not but  
that

that every man hath a *Right* to publish and propagate the true Religion, and to declare it against a false one; but there is no *Obligation* upon any man to attempt this to no purpose, and when without a miracle it can have no other effect but the loss of his own life: unless he have an immediate command and Commission from God to this purpose, and be endued with a power of miracles, as a publick Seal and Testimony of that Commission, which was the case of the *Apostles*, who after they had received an immediate Commission were not to enter upon the execution of it, but *to stay at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high*. In this case a man is to abide all hazards, and may reasonably expect both extraordinary assistance and success, as the Apostles had; and even a miraculous protection till his work be done; and after that, if he be call'd to suffer Martyrdom, a supernatural support under those sufferings.

And that they are guilty however of gross Hypocrisie who pretend a further obligation of Conscience in this matter, I shall give this plain Demonstration, which relies upon Concessions generally made on all hands, and by all Parties. No  
Protes-

Protestant (that I know of) holds himself obliged to go and Preach up his Religion and make Converts in *Spain* or *Italy*: Nor do either the *Protestant* Ministers or *Popish* Priests think themselves bound in conscience to Preach the Gospel in *Turky*, and to confute the *Alcheran*, to convert the *Mahometans*. And what is the Reason? because of the severity of the Inquisition in *Popish* Countreys, and of the Laws in *Turky*. But doth the danger then alter the obligation of Conscience? No certainly; but it makes men throw off the false pretence and disguise of it: But where there is a real obligation of Conscience, danger should not deter men from their Duty, as it did not the Apostles: which shews their case to be different from ours, and that probably this matter was stated right at first. So that whatever is pretended, this is certain, that the *Priests* and *Jesuits* of the Church of *Rome* have in truth no more obligation of conscience to make Converts here in *England* than in *Sueden* or *Turky*; where it seems the evident danger of the attempt hath for these many years given them a perfect discharge from their duty in this particular. I shall joyn the

Third



*Third and Fourth Observations together.* That though the true Religion may have several prejudices and objections against it, yet upon examination there will be found those real advantages on its side, that it may safely be referred to any considerate mans choice: If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve. If it seem evil unto you, Intimating that to some persons and upon some accounts it may appear so. But when the matter is truly represented, the choice is not difficult, nor requires any long deliberation, Chuse you this day whom you will serve. Let but the Cause be fully and impartially heard, and a wise man may determine himself upon the spot, and give his Verdict without ever going from the Bar.

The true Religion hath always layen under some prejudices with partial and inconsiderate men; which commonly spring from one of these two Causes, either the *Prepossessions of a contrary Religion*, or the *contrariety of the true Religion to the vicious inclinations and practices of men*, which usually lyes at the bottom of all prejudice against Religion. Religion is an enemy to mens beloved lusts, and there-

C c

fore

fore they are enemies to Religion. I begin with the first, which is as much as I shall be able to compass at this time.

I. *The Prepossessions of a false Religion*; which commonly pretends two advantages on its side, *Antiquity* and *Universality*; and is wont to object to the true Religion *Novelty* and *Singularity*. And both these are intimated both before and after the Text: *Put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt: And chuse you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell.* Idolatry was the Religion of their Fathers, and had spread it self over the greatest and most ancient Nations of the world and the most famous for Learning and Arts, the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*; and was the Religion of the *Amorites* and the Nations round about them. So that *Joshua* represents the *Heathen Religion* with all its strength and advantage, and do's not dissemble its confident pretence to *Antiquity* and *Universality*, whereby they would also insinuate the *Novelty* and *Singularity* of the worship of the God of Israel. And it is

very

very well worthy our observation, that one or both of these have always been the Exceptions of false Religions (especially of *Idolatry* and *Superstition*) against the true Religion. The ancient Idolaters of the World pretended their Religion to be *ancient* and *universal*, that their Fathers served these gods, and that the worship of the God of *Israel* was a plain Innovation upon the *ancient* and *Catholick* Religion of the world, and that the very first rise and original of it was within the memory of their Fathers; and no doubt they were almost perpetually upon the Jews with that pert question, *Where was your Religion before Abraham?* and telling them, that it was the Religion of a very small part and corner of the world, confined within a little Territory: But the great Nations of the world, the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*, famous for all kind of knowledge and wisdom, and indeed all the Nations round about them, worshipped other gods: And therefore it was an intolerable arrogance and singularity in them, to condemn their Fathers and all the world, to be of a Religion different from all other Nations, and hereby to separate themselves and make a *Schism* from the rest of mankind.

And when the Gospel appeared in the world, which the Apostle to the *Hebrews* (to prevent the scandal of that word) calls *the time of Reformation*, the *Jews* and *Heathen* still renewed the same Objections against Christianity. The *Jews* urged against it, not the ancient *Scriptures* and the true word of God, but that which they pretended to be of much greater Authority, the *unwritten Word*, the ancient and constant *Traditions* of their Church; and branded this new Religion with the name of Heresie, *After the way* (saith St. Paul) *that you call Heresie, so worship I the God of my Fathers; believing all things that are written in the Law, and in the Prophets*: By which we see, that they of the Church of *Rome* were not the first who called it *Heresie* to reject humane Traditions, and to make the *Scriptures* the Rule of Faith: This was done long before by their reverend Predecessors, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

And the *Gentiles*, they pretended against it both *Antiquity* and *Universality*, the constant belief and practice of all Ages, and almost all Places of the World; *Sequimur majores nostros qui feliciter secuti sunt suos*, says Symmachus, *We follow our*  
Fore-

*Fore-fathers, who happily followed theirs;*  
But you bring in a new Religion, never  
known nor heard of in the World before.

And when the Christian Religion  
was most miserably depraved and  
corrupted, in that dismal night of Ig-  
norance which overspread these *Western*  
parts of the World about the *Ninth* and  
*Tenth Centuries*; and many pernicious  
Doctrines and Superstitious Practices  
were introduced, to the wofull defacing  
of the Christian Religion, and making it  
quite another thing from what our Savi-  
our had left it; and these Corruptions  
and Abuses had continued for several A-  
ges: No sooner was a *Reformation* attem-  
pted but the Church of *Rome* make the  
same outcry of *Novelty* and *Singularity*:  
And though we have substantially answer-  
ed it a thousand times, yet we cannot ob-  
tain of them to forbear that threadbare  
Question, *Where was your Religion before*  
*Luther*?

I shall therefore apply my self to an-  
swer these *two* Exceptions with all the  
brevity and clearness I can: And I doubt  
not to make it appear, that as to the  
point of *Universality* (though that be  
no-wise necessary to justify the truth of

any Religion) ours is not inferior to theirs; if we take in the Christians of all Ages, and of all Parts of the World: And as to the point of *Antiquity*, that our Faith and the Doctrines of our Religion have clearly the advantage of theirs; all our Faith being unquestionable ancient, theirs not so.

III. As to the Point of *Universality*. Which they of the Church of Rome, I know not for what reason, will needs make an inseparable property and mark of the true Church. And they never flout at the Protestant Religion with so good a grace among the ignorant People, as when they are bragging of their Numbers, and despising poor Protestancy because embraced by so few. This *pestilent Northern Heresie* (as of late they scornfully call it) entertained it seems only in this cold and cloudy Corner of the World, by a company of dull stupid People, that can neither penetrate into the proofs nor the Possibility of *Transubstantiation*; whereas to the more refined *Southern Wits* all these difficult and obscure Points are as clear as their Sun at Noon-day.

But to speak to the thing it self. If

Num.

Number be necessary to prove the truth and goodness of any Religion, ours upon enquiry will be found not so inconsiderable as our Adversaries would make it. Those of the *Reformed* Religion, according to the most exact calculations that have been made by learned men, being esteemed not much unequal in number to those of the *Romish* persuasion. But then if we take in the ancient Christian Church, whose Faith was the same with ours; and other Christian Churches at this day, which all together are vastly greater and more numerous than the *Roman* Church, and which agree with us, several of them in very considerable Doctrines and Practices in dispute between us and the Church of *Rome*, and all of them in disclaiming that fundamental point of the *Roman* Religion, and *Summ of Christianity* (as *Bellarmine* calls it) I mean the *Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome over all Christians and Churches in the World*; then the Number on our side will be much greater than on theirs.

But we will not stand upon this advantage with them. Suppose we were by much the fewer. So hath the true Church of God often been, without



any the least prejudice to the truth of their Religion. What think we of the Church in *Abraham's* time, which for ought we know was confined to one Family ; and one small Kingdom, that of *Melchisedec* King of *Salem* ? What think we of it in *Moses* his time, when it was confined to one People wandering in a Wilderness ? What of it in *Elijah's* time, when besides the two Tribes that worshipped at *Jerusalem*, there were in the other ten but seven thousand that had not bowed their knee to *Baal* ? What in our Saviour's time, when the whole Christian Church consisted of twelve Apostles, and seventy Disciples, and some few Followers beside ? How would *Bellarmino* have despised this little Flock, because it wanted one or two of his goodliest marks of the true Church, *Universality* and *Splendor* ? And what think we of the Christian Church in the height of *Arianism* and *Pelagianism*, when a great part of *Christendom* was over-run with these Errors, and the number of the *Orthodox* was inconsiderable in comparison of the *Hereticks* ?

But what need I to urge these Instances ? As if the Truth of a Religion were

to be estimated and carried by the *major Vote*; which as it can be an Argument to none but Fools, so I dare say no honest and wise man ever made use of it for a solid proof of the truth and goodness of any Church or Religion. If multitude be an Argument that men are in the right, in vain then hath the *Scripture* said, *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*: For if this Argument be of any force, the greater Number never go wrong.

2. As to the Point of *Antiquity*. This is not always a certain Mark of the true Religion. For surely there was a time when Christianity began and was a new Profession, and then both *Judaism* and *Paganism* had certainly the advantage of it in Point of Antiquity. But the proper Question in this Case is, *Which is the true Ancient Christian Faith, that of the Church of Rome, or Ours?* And to make this matter plain, it is to be considered, that a great part of the *Roman* Faith is the same with *Ours*; as, namely, the Articles of the Apostles *Creed*, as explained by the first four General Councils. And these make up our whole Faith, so far as concerns matters of meer and simple Belief, that are of absolute necessity

cessity to Salvation. And in this Faith of Ours, there is nothing wanting that can be shewn in any ancient *Creed* of the Christian Church. And thus far *Our* Faith, and *theirs* of the *Roman* Church, are undoubtedly of equal Antiquity, that is, as ancient as Christianity it self.

All the Question is, as to the matters in difference between us. The principal whereof are the twelve new Articles of the Creed of Pope *Pius* the IV, concerning the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, *Transubstantiation*, the *Communion in one kind only*, *Purgatory*, &c. not one of which is to be found in any ancient *Creed* or Confession of Faith generally allowed in the Christian Church. The Antiquity of these we deny, and affirm them to be Innovations; and have particularly proved them to be so, not only to the answering, but almost to the silencing of our Adversaries.

And as for the *negative* Articles of the *Protestant* Religion, in opposition to the Errors and Corruptions of the *Romish* Faith, these are by accident become a part of our Faith and Religion, occasioned by their Errors; as the renouncing of the Doctrines of *Arianism* became  
part

part of the *Catholick* Religion, after the rise of that Heresie.

So that the Case is plainly this; We believe and teach all that is contained in the *Creds* of the ancient Christian Church, and was by them esteemed necessary to Salvation: and this is *Our Religion*. But now the Church of *Rome* hath innovated in the Christian Religion, and made several Additions to it, and greatly corrupted it both in the Doctrines and Practices of it: And these *Additions* and *Corruptions* are *their Religion*, as it is distinct from ours; and both because they are *Corruptions* and *Novelties* we have rejected them; And our Rejection of these is our Reformation: And our Reformation we grant (if this will do them any good) not to be so ancient as their *Corruptions*: All Reformation necessarily supposing *Corruptions* and *Errors* to have been before it.

And now we are at a little better leisure to answer that captious Question of theirs, *Where was your Religion before Luther*: Where-ever Christianity was; in some places more pure, in others more corrupted; but especially in these *Western* parts of Christendom overgrown for several

veral Ages with manifold Errors and Corruptions, which the Reformation hath happily cut off, and cast away. So that though our *Reformation* was as late as *Luther*, our *Religion* is as ancient as Christianity it self. For when the *Additions* which the Church of *Rome* hath made to the *ancient* Christian Faith, and their Innovations in Practice are pared off, that which remains of *their* Religion is *ours*; and *this* they cannot deny to be every tittle of it the ancient Christianity.

And what other Answer than this could the *Jews* have given to the like Question, if it had been put to them by the *ancient Idolaters* of the World, *Where was your Religion before Abraham?* but the very same in substance which we now give to the Church of *Rome*? That for many Ages the Worship of the one true God had been corrupted, and the Worship of Idols had prevailed in a great part of the World; that *Abraham* was raised up by God to reform Religion, and to reduce the Worship of God to its first Institution; in the doing whereof he necessarily separated Himself and his Family from the Communion of those Idolaters. So that though the *Reformati-*

on which *Abraham* began was new, yet his *Religion* was truly ancient ; as old as that of *Noah*, and *Enoch*, and *Adam*. Which is the same in substance that we say, and with the same and equal reason.

And if they will still complain of the *Newness* of our *Reformation*, so do we too, and are heartily sorry it began no sooner ; but however better late than never. Besides, it ought to be considered, that this *Objection* of *Novelty* lies against all *Reformation* whatsoever, though never so necessary, and though things be never so much amiss : And it is in effect to say, That if things be once bad, they must never be better, but must always remain as they are ; for they cannot be better without being reformed, and a *Reformation* must begin sometime, and whenever it begins it is certainly new. So that if a real *Reformation* be made, the thing justifies it self ; and no *Objection* of *Novelty* ought to take place against that which upon all accounts was so fit and necessary to be done. And if they of the *Church of Rome* would but speak their mind out in this matter, they are not so much displeased at the *Reformation*

Jer. 51. 9.

mation which we have made because it is new, as because it is a *Reformation*. It was the humour of *Babylon* of old (as the *Prophet* tells us) that she would not be healed; and this is still the temper of the Church of *Rome*, they hate to be reformed; and rather than acknowledge themselves to have been once in an Error, they will continue in it for ever. And this is that which at first made, and still continues the breach and Separation between us; of which we are no wise guilty who have only reformed what was amiss, but they who obstinately persist in their errors, and will needs impose them upon us and will not let us be of their Communion unless we will say they are no Errors.

II.

II. The other *Prejudice* against the true Religion is, the contrariety of it to the vicious inclinations and practices of Men.

It is too heavy a yoke, and lays too great a restraint upon humane Nature. And this is that which in truth lies at the bottom of all Objections against Religion, Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

But this Argument will require a Discourse



course by it self, and therefore I shall not now enter upon it; only crave your patience a little longer, whilst I make some Reflections upon what hath been already delivered.

You see what are the *Exceptions* which Idolatry and Superstition have always made, and do at this day still make, against the true Religion; and how slight and insignificant they are.

But do we then charge the Church of *Rome* with Idolatry; Our Church most certainly does so, and hath always done it from the beginning of the Reformation; in her *Homilies*, and *Liturgy*, and *Canons*, and in the *Writings* of her best and ablest *Champions*. And though I have, as impartially as I could, consider'd what hath been said on both sides in this Controversy; yet I must confess I could never yet see any tolerable defence made by them against this heavy charge. And they themselves acknowledge themselves to be greatly under the suspicion of it, by saying (as *Cardinal Perron* and others do) that the Primitive Christians for some Ages did neither worship Images, nor pray to Saints, for fear of being thought to approach too near the Heathen Idolatry: And which

is yet more; divers of their most learned men do confesse, that if Transubstantiation be not true, they are as gross Idolaters as any in the World. And I hope they do not expect it from us, that in complement to them, and to acquit them from the charge of Idolatry, we should presently deny our senses, and believe Transubstantiation; and if we do not believe this, they grant we have Reason to charge them with Idolatry.

But we own them to be a true Church; which they cannot be, if they be guilty of Idolatry: This they often urge us withall, and there seems at first sight to be something in it: And for that reason I shall endeavour to give so clear and satisfactory an answer to it, as that we may never more be troubled with it.

The truth is, we would fain hope, because they still retain the Essentials of Christianity, and profess to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, that notwithstanding their Corruptions they may still retain the true Essence of a Church: as a man may be truly and really a man, though he have the plague upon him; and for that reason be fit to be avoided by all that wish well to themselves:

elves: But if this will not do, we cannot help it. Therefore to push the matter home; Are they sure that this is a firm and good consequence, *That if they be Idolaters, they cannot be a true Church?* Then let them look to it. It is they, I take it, that are concerned to prove themselves a true Church, and not we to prove it for them. And if they will not understand it of themselves, it is fit they should be told that there is a great difference between Concessions of Charity and of Necessity, and that a very different use ought to be made of them. We are willing to think the best of them; but if they dislike our Charity in this point, nothing against the hair: If they will forgive us this Injury, we will not offend them any more: But rather than have any farther difference with them about this matter, we will for quietness sake compound it thus; That till they can clearly acquit themselves from being Idolaters, they shall never more against their wills be esteemed a true Church.

And now to draw to a Conclusion.

D d

If

*If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, and to worship him only; to pray to him alone, and that only in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ, as he hath given us Commandment; because there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus. If it seem evil unto you, to have the liberty to serve God in a Language you can understand; and to have the free use of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto Salvation; and to have the Sacraments of our Religion entirely administered to us, as our Lord did institute and appoint.*

*And on the other hand, if it seem good to us, to put our necks once more under that yoke, which our Fathers were not able to bear: If it be really a Preferment to a Prince to hold the Pope's Sturp, and a Privilege to be deposed by him at his pleasure, and a courtesie to be kill'd at his command; If to pray without Understanding, and to obey without Reason, and to believe against Sense; Ignorance, and implicit Faith, and an Inquisition, be in good earnest such charming and desirable things: Then welcome Popery; which, wherever thou comest*

comest, dost infallibly bring all these wonderfull Privileges and Blessings along with thee.

But the Question is not now about the choice, but the change of our Religion, after we have been so long settled in the quiet possession and enjoyment of it. Men are very loth to change even a false Religion. *Hath a Nation changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods?* And surely there is much more reason why we should be tenacious of the Truth, and hold fast that which is good.

We have the best Religion in the World, the very same which the Son of God revealed, which the Apostles planted, and confirmed by Miracles, and which the noble Army of Martyrs sealed with their Blood; And we have retrench'd from it all false Doctrines and superstitious Practices which have been added since. And I think we may without immodesty say, That upon the plain square of Scripture and Reason, of the Tradition and Practice of the first and best Ages of the Christian Church, we have fully justified Our Religion; and made it evident to the World, that our Adversaries are put to very hard shifts, and upon a perpetual

disadvantage in the defence of *Theirs*

I wish it were as easie for us to justifie our Lives as our Religion. I do not mean in comparison of our Adversaries ( for that, as bad as we are, I hope we are yet able to do ) but in comparison of the Rules of our holy Religion, from which we are infinitely swerv'd; which I would to God we all did seriously consider and lay to heart: I say, in comparison of the Rules of our Holy Religion, which teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present World, in expectation of the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, &c.

JOSHUA

## JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve.*

THESE words, as I have already declared in the former Discourse, are the last counsel and advice which *Joshua* gave to the People of *Israel*, after he had safely conducted them into the Land of *Canaan*. And that he might more effectually perswade them to continue steadfast in the worship of the true God, by an eloquent kind of insinuation he doth as it were once more set them at liberty and leave them to their own choice; *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this day whom you will serve.*

The plain sense of which Words may be resolved into this *Proposition*, That notwithstanding all the prejudices and objections against the true Religion, yet it hath those real advantages on its side

E e

that



that it may safely be referred to any impartial and considerate man's choice; *If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord;* intimating that to some persons, and upon some accounts, it may seem so; but when the matter is thoroughly examined, the resolution, and choice cannot be difficult, nor require any long deliberation, *Chuse you this day whom you will serve.*

The true Religion hath always layn under some prejudices with partial and inconsiderate men, arising chiefly from these two Causes; the prepossessions of a false Religion; and the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneasiness of it in point of practice.

First, *From the prepossessions of a false Religion;* which hath always been wont to lay claim to *Antiquity and Unversality*, and to charge the true Religion with *Novelty and Singularity*. And both these are intimated before the Text, *Put away the Gods whom your Fathers served, on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and chuse you this day whom you will serve.* It was pretended that the worship of Idols was the ancient Religion of the world, of those great Nations, the *Egyptians*

tians and Chaldeans, and of all the Nations round about them. But this hath already been considered at large.

Secondly, There are another sort of prejudices against Religion, more apt to stick with men of better sense and reason; and these arise principally from the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneasiness of it in point of practice. It is pretended that Religion is a heavy yoke, and lays too great a restraint upon humane Nature, and that the Laws of it bear too hard upon the general inclinations of mankind.

I shall not at present meddle with the speculative Objections against Religion, upon account of the pretended unreasonableness of many things in point of Belief: because the contrariety of the true Religion to the inclinations of men, and the uneasiness of it in point of practice, is that which in truth lyes at the bottom of Atheism and Infidelity, and raises all that animosity which is in the minds of bad men against Religion, and exasperates them to oppose it with all their wit and malice: *Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* And if this prejudice were but once re-

E e 2

moved;

moved, and men were in some measure reconciled to the practice of Religion, the speculative Objections against it would almost vanish of themselves : For there wants little else to enable a man to answer them, but a willingness of mind to have them answered, and that we have no interest and inclination to the contrary. And therefore I shall at present wholly apply my self to remove this prejudice against Religion, from *the contrariety of it to the inclinations of men, and the uneasiness of it in point of practice.*

And there are two parts of this Objection.

1<sup>st</sup>. That a great part of the Laws of Religion do thwart the natural inclinations of men, which may reasonably be supposed to be from God. And,

2<sup>ly</sup>. That all of them together are a heavy yoke, and do lay too great a restraint upon humane Nature, intrenching too much upon the pleasures and liberty of it.

I. *That a great part of the Laws of Religion do thwart the natural inclinations of men, which may reasonably be supposed to be from God.* So that God seems to have set our nature and our duty at variance,

to have given us appetites and inclinations one way, and Laws another : which if it were true must needs render the practice of Religion very grievous and uneasy.

The force of this Objection is very smartly expressed in those celebrated Verses of a Noble Poet of our own, which are so frequently in the mouths of many who are thought to bear no good will to Religion.

*O wearisome condition of Humanity,  
Born under one Law, to another bound ;  
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden Vanity ;  
Created sick, commanded to be sound.  
If Nature did not take delight in blood,  
She would have made more easie ways to good.*

So that this Objection would fain charge the sins of men upon God ; First upon account of the evil inclinations of our Nature ; and then of the contrariety of our duty to those inclinations. And from the beginning man hath always been apt to lay the blame of his faults where it can least lye, upon goodness and perfection it self. The very first sin that ever man was guilty of he endeavoured to throw upon God ; *The woman whom*

thou gavest me (saith Adam) she gave me of the tree, and I did eat: And his posterity are still apt to excuse themselves the same way. But to return a particular answer to this Objection.

1. We will acknowledge so much of it as is true; That there is a great degeneracy and corruption of humane Nature, from what it was originally framed when it came out of God's hands; of which the Scripture gives us this account, that it was occasioned by the voluntary transgression of a plain and easie Command given by God to our first Parents. And this weakness contracted by the fall of our first Parents naturally descends upon us their posterity, and visibly discovers it self in our inclinations to evil, and impotence to that which is good.

And of this the heathen Philosophers, from the light of nature, and their own experience and observation of themselves and others, were very sensible; that humane Nature was very much declined from its primitive rectitude, and sunk into a weak and drooping and sickly State, which they called a *νεκροψυχια*, the moulting of the wings of the Soul: But yet they were so just and reasonable as not to charge this upon God, but upon  
some

some corruption and impurity contracted by the Soul in a former State, before its union with the Body. For the descent of the Soul into these gross earthly Bodies they looked upon as partly the punishment of faults committed in a former State, and partly as the opportunity of a new tryal in order to its purgation and recovery. And this was the best account they were able to give of this matter, without the Light of Divine Revelation.

So that the degeneracy of humane Nature is universally acknowledged, and God acquitted from being the cause of it: But however, the posterity of *Adam* do all partake of the weakness contracted by his fall, and do still labour under the miseries and inconveniences of it. But then this degeneracy is not total. For though our faculties be much weakened and disordered, yet they are not destroyed nor wholly perverted. Our natural Judgment and Conscience doth still dictate to us what is good, and what we ought to do; and the impressions of the natural Law, as to the great lines of our duty, are still legible upon our hearts. So that the Law written in God's Word is not contrary to the Law written upon our hearts. And



therefore it is not truly said, *that we are born under one Law, and bound to another.* But the great disorder is, that our inferior faculties, our sensitive appetite and passions, are broke loose and have got head of our Reason, and are upon all occasions apt to rebell against it: But our Judgment still dictates the very same things which the Law of God doth enjoin.

It is likewise very visible, that the sad effects of this degeneracy do not appear equally and alike in all: whether from the better or worse temper of our Bodies or from some other more secret cause, I shall not determine, because I know not: But that there is a difference is evident. For though a proneness to evil, and some seeds of it be in all, yet we may plainly discover in many very early and forward inclinations to some kinds of vertue and goodness; which being cultivated by Education, may under the ordinary influence of God's grace be carried on with great ease to great perfection.

And there are others who are not so strongly bent to that which is evil, but that by good instruction and example in their tender years they may be swayed the other way, and without great difficulty formed to goodness. There



There are some indeed (which is the hardest case) in whom there do very early appear strong propensions and inclinations to evil, especially to some particular kinds of vice: But the case of these is not desperate; Though greater attention and care, and a much more prudent management is required in the education of such persons, to correct their evil tempers, and by degrees to bend their inclinations the right way: And if the seeds of piety and vertue be but carefully sown at first, very much may be done by this means, even in the most depraved Natures, towards the altering and changing of them; however, to the checking and controuling of their vicious inclinations. And if these persons, when they come to riper years, would pursue these advantages of education, and take some pains with themselves, and earnestly seek the assistance of God's grace, I doubt not but even these persons by degrees might at last get the mastery of their unhappy tempers.

For next to the Being and perfections of God, and the immortality of our own Souls, there is no Principle of Religion that I do more firmly believe than this, that God hath that love for men that if  
we

we do heartily beg his assistance, and be not wanting to our selves, he will afford it to every one of us in proportion to our need of it; that he is always beforehand with us, and prevents every man with the gracious offers of his help. And I doubt not but many very perverse Natures have thus been reclaimed. For God, who is the *Lover of Souls* (as the Son of *Sirach* calls him) though he may put some men under more difficult circumstances of becoming good than others, yet he leaves no man under a fatal necessity of being wicked and perishing everlastingly. He tenderly considers every man's case and circumstances, and it is we that pull destruction upon our selves with the works of our own hands: But as sure as God is good and just, no man in the world is ruined for want of having sufficient help and aid afforded to him by God for his recovery.

2. It is likewise to be considered that God did not design to create man in the full possession of happiness at first, but to train him up to it by the tryal of his obedience. But there could be no tryal of our obedience without some difficulty in our duty: Either by reason of powerfull temptations from without, or of crofs and perverse inclinations from within. Our

Our first parents, in their state of innocency, had only the tryal of temptation without; to which they yielded, and were overcome; having only a natural power to have resisted the temptation, without any aid of supernatural Grace: And that weakness to good, and proneness to evil, which they by wilfull transgression contracted, is naturally derived to us; and we necessarily partake of the bitterness and impurity of the Fountain from whence we spring. So that we now labour under a double difficulty; being assaulted by temptations from without, and incited by evil inclinations from within: But then, to balance these, we have a double advantage; that a greater reward is proposed to us, than for ought we know would have been conferr'd on our first parents had they continued innocent; and that we are endued with a supernatural power to conflict with these difficulties. So that, according to the mercifull dispensation of God, all this conflict between our inclination and our duty does only serve to give a fairer opportunity for the fitting tryal of our obedience, and for the more glorious reward of it.

3. God

3. God hath provided an universal remedy for this degeneracy and weakness of humane Nature: So that what we lost by the first *Adam* is abundantly repaired to us by the second. This *St. Paul* tells us at large, *Rom. 5.* that *as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so the Grace of God hath abounded to all men by Jesus Christ:* And that to such a degree, as effectually to countervail the ill effects of original sin, and really to enable men, if they be not wanting to themselves, to master and subdue all the bad inclinations of nature, even in those who seem to be naturally most corrupt and depraved.

And if this be true, we may without any reflexion upon God acknowledge, that though he did not at first create man *sick and weak*, yet he having made himself so, his posterity are born so: But then God hath not left us helpless in this weak and miserable State, into which by wilfull transgression mankind is fallen: But as he commands us to be *sound*, so he affords us sufficient aids of his grace by *Jesus Christ* for our recovery.

And though *there is a Law in our Members warring against the Law of our Minds, and captivating us to the Law of Sin*

and Death; i. e. though our sensitive appetite and passions are apt to rebell against the reason of our minds and the dictates of our natural Conscience, yet every Christian may say with St. Paul, *thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*, i. e. hath not left us destitute of a sufficient aid and strength to enable us to conquer the rebellious motions of sin, by the powerful assistance of that grace which is so plentifully offered to us in the Gospel. And this is the case of all those who live under the Gospel: As for others, as their case is best known to God, so we have no reason to doubt but that his infinite goodness and mercy takes that care of them which becomes a mercifull *Creator*: Though both the measures, and the methods of his mercy towards them are secret and unknown to us.

4. The hardest contest between man's inclination and duty, is in those who have wilfully contracted vicious habits, and by that means, render'd their duty much more difficult to themselves; having greatly improved the evil inclinations of nature by wicked practice and custom. For the *Scripture* plainly supposeth, that men may debauch even corrupt

rape nature, and make themselves ten fold more the Children of wrath and of the Devil than they were by Nature.

This is a case sadly to be deplored, but yet not utterly to be despaired of. And therefore those, who by a long progress in an evil course are plunged into this sad condition, ought to consider, that they are not to be rescued out of it by an ordinary resolution, and a common grace of God. Their case plainly requires an extraordinary remedy. For he that is deeply engaged in vice is like a man laid fast in a bog, who by a faint and lazy struggling to get out, do's but spend his strength to no purpose, and sinks himself the deeper into it: The only way is, by a resolute and vigorous effort to spring out, if possible, at once. And therefore in this case, to a vigorous resolution there must be joyned an earnest application to God for his powerfull grace and assistance, to help us out of this miserable State. And if we be truly sensible of the desperate danger of our condition, the pressing necessity of our case will be apt to inspire us with a mighty resolution. For *power and necessity are neighbours*, and never dwell far asunder. When men are forely urged and  
press'd



...d, they find a power in themselves which they thought they had not. Like a coward driven up to a wall, who in the extremity of distress and despair will fight terribly and perform wonders: or like a man lame of the Gout, who being assaulted by a present and terrible danger forgets his Disease, and will find his legs rather than lose his life.

And in this, I do not speak above the rate of humane Nature, and what men thoroughly roused and awakened to a sense of their danger, by a mighty resolution may morally do, through that Divine grace and assistance which is ever ready to be afforded to well resolved minds, and such as are sincerely bent to return to God and their Duty. More than this I cannot say for the encouragement of those who have proceeded far in an evil course: And they who have made their case so very desperate, ought to be very thankfull to God that there is any remedy left for them.

5. From all that hath been said, it evidently appears, how malicious a suggestion it is, that God seeks the destruction of men, and hath made his Laws on purpose so difficult and cross to our inclinations that he might have an advantage to ruine

us



us for our disobedience to them. Alas, we are so absolutely under the Power of God, and so unable to withstand it, that he may destroy us when he pleaseth, without seeking pretences for it: *For who hath resisted his will?* If goodness were not his nature, he hath power enough to bear out whatever he hath a mind to do to us. But our destruction is plainly of our selves, and God is free from the blood of all men. And he hath not made the way to Eternal Life so difficult to any of us, with a design to make us miserable, but that we by a vigorous resolution, and an unwearied diligence, and a patient continuance in well doing, might win and wear a more glorious Crown, and be fit to receive a more ample reward from his bounty and goodness: yea, in some sense, I may say, from his justice; *For God is not unrighteous, to forget our work and labour and love.* He will fully consider all the pains that any of us take in his service, and all the difficulties that we struggle with out of love to God and goodness. So that this Objection, from the clashing of our duty with our inclination, is I hope fully answered: Since God hath provided so powerfull and effectual a remedy against our natural impotency  
and

and infirmity, by the grace of the Gos-

And though to those who have wilfully contracted vicious habits, a religious and vertuous course of life be very difficult, yet the main difficulty lyes in our first entrance upon it: And when that is over, the ways of goodness are as easie as it is fit any thing should be that is so excellent, and that hath the encouragement of so glorious a reward. Custom will reconcile men almost to any thing: but there are those charms in the ways of wisdom and vertue, that a little acquaintance and conversation with them will soon make them more delightful than any other course. And who would grudge any pains and trouble to bring himself into so safe and happy a condition? After we have tryed both courses, of Religion and Profaneness, of Vertue and Vice, we shall certainly find, that nothing is so wise, so easie, and so comfortable as to be vertuous and good, and always to do that which we are inwardly convinced we ought to do. Nor would I desire more of any man in this matter, than to follow the soberest convictions of his own mind, and to do that which upon the most serious considera-

tion at all times, in prosperity and affliction, in sickness and health, in the time of life and at the hour of death, he judgeth wisest and safest for him to do. I proceed to the

## II.

II. Branch of the Objection, *that the Laws of Religion (and particularly of the Christian Religion) are a heavy yoke, laying too great a restraint upon humane nature, and entrenching too much upon the pleasures and liberty of it.*

There was, I confess, some pretence for this Objection against the Jewish Religion; which by the multitude of its positive Institutions and external observances must needs have been very burthensome. And the same Objection lyes against the Church of Rome, who (as they have handled Christianity) by the unreasonable number of their needless and senseless Ceremonies, have made the yoke of *Christ* heavier than that of *Moses*, and the *Gospel* a more carnal Commandment than the *Law*. So that *Christianity* is lost among them in the trappings and accoutrements of it; with which instead of adorning Religion they have strangely disguised it, and quite stifled it in the crowd of external Rites and Ceremonies.

But

But the pure Christian Religion, as it was delivered by our *Saviour*, hath hardly any thing in it that is positive; except the two Sacraments, which are not very troublesome neither, but very much for our comfort and advantage; because they move and confirm to us the great blessings and privileges of our Religion. In other things, Christianity hath hardly imposed any other Laws upon us but what are enacted in our Natures, or are agreeable to the prime and fundamental Laws of it: nothing but what every man's reason either dictates to him to be necessary, or approves as highly fit and reasonable.

But we do most grossly mistake the nature of pleasure and liberty, if we promise them to our selves in any evil and wicked course. For, upon due search and tryal it will be found, that true pleasure, and perfect freedom, are nowhere to be found but in the practice of virtue, and in the service of God. The Laws of Religion do not abridge us of any pleasure that a wise man can desire, and fully enjoy, I mean without a greater evil and trouble consequent upon it. The pleasure of commanding our appetites, and governing our passions, by the rules

But  
F f 2  
of

of Reason (which are the Laws of God) is infinitely to be preferred before any sensual pleasure whatsoever: Because it is the pleasure of wisdom and discretion; and gives us the satisfaction of having done that which is best and fittest for reasonable Creatures to do. Who would not rather chuse to govern himself as *Scipio* did, amidst all the temptations and opportunities of sensual pleasure which his power and victories presented to him, than to wallow in all the delights of sense?

Nothing is more certain in reason and experience, than that every inordinate appetite and affection is a punishment to itself; and is perpetually croiling its own pleasure, and defeating its own satisfaction, by over-shooting the mark it aims at. For instance, *Intemperance* in eating and drinking, instead of delighting and satisfying nature, doth but load and cloy it; and instead of quenching a natural thirst, which it is extremely pleasant to do, creates an unnatural one, which is troublesome and endless. The pleasure of *Revenge*, as soon as it is executed, turns into grief and pity, guilt and remorse, and a thousand melancholy wishes that we had restrained our selves from so unreasonable

reasonable an Act. And the same is as evident in other sensual excesses, not so fit to be described. We may trust *Epicurus* for this, that there can be no true pleasure without temperance in the use of pleasure. And God and Reason have set us no other bounds concerning the use of sensual pleasures, but that we take care not to be injurious to our selves, or others, in the kind, or degree of them. And it is very visible, that all sensual excess is naturally attended with a double inconvenience: As it goes beyond the limits of nature, it begets bodily pains and diseases: As it transgresseth the rules of Reason and Religion, it breeds guilt and remorse in the mind. And these are, beyond comparison, the two greatest evils in this world: a diseased body, and a discontented mind. And in this I am sure I speak to the inward feeling and experience of men; and say nothing but what every vicious man finds, and hath a more lively sense of, than is to be expressed by words.

When all is done, there is no pleasure comparable to that of Innocency, and freedom from the stings of a guilty conscience: This is a pure and spiritual pleasure, much above any sensual delight.



And yet among all the delights of sense, that of health (which is the natural consequent of a sober, and chaste, and regular life) is a sensual pleasure far beyond that of any Vice: For it is the life of life; and that which gives a grateful relish to all our other enjoyments. It is not indeed so violent and transporting a pleasure, but it is pure, and even, and lasting, and hath no guilt and regret, no sorrow and trouble in it, or after it: which is a worm that infallibly breeds in all vicious and unlawfull pleasures, and makes them to be bitterness in the end.

All the ways of sin are so beset with thorns and difficulties on every side, there are so many unanswerable objections against Vice, from the unreasonableness and ugliness of it, from the remorse that attends it, from the endless misery that follows it, that none but the rash and inconsiderate can obtain leave of themselves to commit it. It is the Daughter of inadvertency, and blindness, and folly; and the Mother of guilt, and repentance, and woe. There is no pleasure that will hold out and abide with us to the last, but that of Innocency and well-doing. All sin is folly; and as Seneca truly says, *omnis stultitia laborat fastidio*



*all folly soon grows sick and weary of it self.* The pleasure of it is slight and superficial, but the trouble and remorse of it pierceth our very hearts.

And then as to the other part of the Objection, *That Religion restrains us of our liberty.* The contrary is most evidently true; that sin and vice are the greatest slavery. For he is truly a slave, who is not at liberty to follow his own judgment, and to do those things which he inwardly convinced it is best for him to do: but is subject to the unreasonable commands, and the tyrannical power and violence of his lusts and passions; So that he is not master of himself, but other Lords have got dominion over him, and he is perfectly at their beck and command. One vice or passion bids him go, and he goes; another come, and he comes; and a third, do this, and he doth it. The man is at perpetual variance with his own mind, and continually committing the things which he condemns in himself. And it is all one, whether a man be subject to the will and humour of another person, or to his own lusts and passions. Only this of the two is the worse, because the Tyrant is at home, and always ready at hand to do-

minceer over him. He is got within him, and so much the harder to be vanquished and overcome.

But the service of God, and obedience to his Laws is perfect liberty. Because the Law of God requires nothing of us, but what is recommended to us by our own reason and from the benefit and advantage of doing it: nothing but what is much more for our own interest to do it, than it can be for God's to command it. And if in some things God exact obedience of us more indispensibly, and under severer penalties, it is because those things are in their Nature more necessary to our felicity. And how could God possibly have dealt more graciously and kindly with us, than to oblige us most strictly to that which is most evidently for our good: and to make such Laws for us, as if we live in obedience to them will infallibly make us happy. So that taking all things into consideration, the interest of our bodies and our souls, of the present and the future, of this world and the other, Religion is the most reasonable and wise, the most comfortable and compendious course that any man can take in order to his own happiness.

The

The consideration whereof ought to be a mighty endearment of our duty to us, and a most prevalent argument with us to yield a ready and chearfull obedience to the Laws of God; which are in truth for many acts of grace and favour to mankind, the real privileges of our nature, and the proper means and causes of our happiness: And do restrain us from nothing, but from doing mischief to our selves; from playing the fools and making ourselves miserable.

And therefore instead of opposing Religion upon pretence of the unreasonable restraints of it, we ought to thank God heartily, that he hath laid so strict an obligation upon us to regard and pursue our true interest; and hath been pleased to take that care of us, as to set bounds to our sense and wild appetites by our duty; and in giving us rules to live by, hath no ways complied with our inconsiderate and foolish inclinations, to our real harm and prejudice; But hath made those things necessary for us to do, which in all respects are best for us; and which, if we were perfectly left to our own liberty, ought in all reason to be our free and first choice: and hath made the folly and inconvenience of sin so grossly pal-  
ble,

ble, that every man may see it beforehand that will but consider, and at the beginning of a bad course look to the end of it: and they that will not consider, shall be forced from wofull experience at last to acknowledge it, when they find the dismal effects and mischievous consequences of their vices still meeting them at one turn or other.

And now, by all that hath been said upon this Argument, I hope we are satisfied that Religion is no such intolerable yoke, and that upon a due and full consideration of things it cannot seem evil unto any of us *to serve the Lord*: nay, on the contrary, that it is absolutely necessary, both to our present peace and our future felicity: And that a religious and vertuous life is not only upon all accounts the most prudent, but also we are entred upon it, and accustomed to it, the most pleasant course that any man can take: and however inconsiderate men may complain of the restraints of Religion that it is not one jot more our duty, than it is our privilege and our happiness.

And I cannot think that upon sober consideration any man could see reason to thank God to be released from any of his

his Laws, or to have had the contrary to them enjoyed. Let us suppose, that the Laws of God had been just the Reverse of what they now are; that he had commanded us, under severe penalties, to deal falsely and fraudulently with our neighbour; to demean our selves ungratefully to our best friends and benefactors; to be drunk every day, and to pursue sensual pleasures to the endangering of our health and life: How should we have complained of the unreasonableness of these Laws, and have murmured at the slavery of such intolerable impositions? And yet now that God hath commanded us the contrary, things every way agreeable to our reason and interest, we are not pleased neither. What will content us? As our Saviour expostulates in a like case, *wherunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto Children playing in the Market-place, and calling unto their Companions, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned, and ye have not lamented.* This is perfectly childish, to be pleased with nothing; neither to like this, nor the contrary. We are not contented with the Laws of God as they are, and yet the contrary to them we should have esteemed the greatest grievance in the World.

And

And if this be true that the Laws of God, how contrary soever to our vicious inclinations, are really calculated for our benefit and advantage, it would almost be an affront to wise and considerate men to importune them to their interest; and with great earnestness to persuade them to that which in all respects is so visibly for their advantage. *Chuse you therefore this day whom you will serve; God, or your lusts.* And take up a speedy resolution in a matter of so great and pressing a concernment; chuse you *this day*.

Where there is great hazard in the doing of a thing, it is good to deliberate long before we undertake it; but where the thing is not only safe but beneficial, and not only hugely beneficial but highly necessary; when our life and our happiness depends upon it, and all the danger lies in the delay of it; there we cannot be too sudden in our resolution, nor too speedy in the execution of it. That which is evidently safe, needs no deliberation; and that which is absolutely necessary, will admit of none.

Therefore resolve upon it out of hand; *to day, whilst it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* In the days of your youth and



and health; for that is the acceptable time; that is the day of salvation: Before the evil day comes, and you be driven to it by the terrible apprehension and approach of death, when men fly to God only for fear of his wrath. For the greatest Atheists and Infidels, when they come to dye (if they have any of that reason left, which they have used so ill) have commonly right opinions about God and Religion. For then the confidence as well as the comfort of Atheism leaves them, as the Devil uses to do Witches when they are in distress. Then with *Nebuchadnezzar*, when they are recovered from being beasts, they look up to heaven and their understanding returns to them: Then they believe a God, and cannot help it: they believe, and tremble at the thoughts of him. Thus *Lucretius*, one of their great Authors, observes, that when men are in distress,

*Acrius advertunt animos ad Religionem,*

The thoughts of Religion are then more quick and pungent upon their minds,

*Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo  
Eliciuntur, & eripitur persona, manet res.*

Mens words then come from the  
bottom



bottom of their hearts; the mask is taken off, and things then appear as in truth they are.

But then perhaps it may be too late to make this choice: Nay then it can hardly be choice, but necessity. Men do not then chuse to serve the Lord, but they are urged and forced to it by their fears. They have served their lusts all their life long, and now they would fain serve themselves of God at the hour of death. They have done what they can, by their insolent contempt and defiance of the Almighty, to make themselves miserable; and now that they can stand out no longer against him, they are contented at last to be beholding to him to make them happy. The mercies of God are vast and boundless, but yet methinks it is too great a presumption in all reason, for men to design before-hand to make the mercy of God the sanctuary and retreat of a sinfull life.

To draw then to a Conclusion of this Discourse. If safety, or pleasure, or liberty, or wisdom, or vertue, or even happiness it self have any temptation in them, Religion hath all these baits and allurements. What *Tully* says of *Philosophy* is much more true of the *Christian Religion*,

Religion, the Wisdom and Philosophy which is from above; *nunquam satis laudari poterit, cui qui pareat, omne tempus ætatis sine molestia degere possit.* We can never praise it enough, since whoever lives according to the rules of it, may pass the whole age of his life (I may add, his whole duration, this life and the other) without trouble.

Philosophy hath given us several plausible rules for the attaining of peace and tranquillity of mind, but they fall very much short of bringing men to it. The very best of them faile us upon the greatest occasions. But the *Christian Religion* hath effectually done all that which *Philosophy* pretended to, and aimed at. The Precepts and Promises of the Holy Scriptures are every way sufficient for our comfort, and for our instruction in righteousness: to correct all the errours, and to bear us up under all the evils and adversities of humane life: especially that holy and heavenly Doctrine which is contained in the admirable *Sermons* of our Saviour, *quem cum legimus, quem Philosophum non contemnimus?* whose excellent discourses when we read, what Philosopher do we not despise? None of the *Philosophers* could, upon sure grounds, give

give that encouragement to their Scholars which our Saviour does to his Disciples; *take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easie, and my burthen is light.*

This is the advantage of the *Christian Religion* sincerely believed and practised, that it gives perfect rest and tranquillity to the mind of man: It frees us from the guilt of an evil conscience, and from the power of our lusts, and from the slavish fear of death and of the vengeance of another World. It builds our comfort upon a rock, which will abide all storms, and remain unshaken in every condition, and will last and hold out for ever: *He that beareth these sayings of mine, and doth them (saith our Lord) I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock.*

In short, Religion makes the life of man a wise design, regular and constant to its self; because it unites all our resolutions and actions in one great end: Whereas without Religion the life of man is a wild, and fluttering, and inconsistent thing, without any certain scope and design. The vicious man lives at randome, and acts by chance: For he that walks by no rule can carry on no settled

settled and steady design. It would pity a man's heart to see, how hard such men are put to it for diversion; and what a burden time is to them; and how sollicitous they are to devise ways, not to spend it but to squander it away. For their great grievance is consideration, and to be obliged to be intent upon any thing that is serious. They hurry from one vanity and folly to another; and plunge themselves into drink, not to quench their thirst, but their guilt: and are beholding to every vain man, and to every trifling occasion, that can but help to take time off their hands. Wretched and inconsiderate men! who have so vast a work before them, the happiness of all eternity to take care of and provide for, and yet are at a loss how to employ their time! So that Irreligion and Vice makes life an extravagant and unnatural thing, because it perverts and overthrows the natural course and order of things. For instance; according to nature men labour to get an Estate, to free themselves from temptations to rapine and injury; and that they may have wherewithall to supply their own wants, and to relieve the needs of others. But now the covetous man heaps up Riches, not

to enjoy them, but to have them; and starves himself in the midst of plenty, and most unnaturally cheats and robs himself of that which is his own; and makes a hard shift to be as poor and miserable with a great Estate, as any man can be without it. According to the design of nature, men should eat and drink that they may live; but the voluptuous man only lives that he may eat and drink. Nature in all sensual enjoyments designs pleasure, which may certainly be had within the limits of virtue; But vice rashly pursues pleasure into the enemies quarters; and never stops, till the sinner be surrounded and seized upon by pain and torment.

So that take away God and Religion, and men live to no purpose; without proposing any worthy and considerable end of life to themselves. Whereas the fear of God, and the care of our immortal Souls, fixeth us upon one great design, to which our whole life, and all the actions of it are ultimately referr'd, *ubi unus Deus colitur* (saith Lactantius) *ibi vita, & omnis actus, ad unum caput, & ad unam summam refertur*; when we acknowledge God as the Author of our Being, as our Sovereign, and our Judge,

our

our end and our happiness is then fixed ;  
and we can have but one reasonable de-  
sign, and that is, by endeavouring to  
please God to gain his favour and prote-  
ction in this World, and to arrive at the  
blisfull enjoyment of him in the other :  
*In whose presence is fullness of Joy ; and at  
whose right hand are pleasures for ever-  
more.* To Him, Father, Son, and Holy  
Ghost, be all honour and glory, domi-  
nion and power, now and for ever.  
*Amen.*

---

G g 2      A

---

our end and our happiness is then secured;  
and we can have but one reason for  
it; and that is, by endeavouring to  
please God to gain his favour and pre-  
servation in this World, and to arrive at the  
eternal enjoyment of him in the other.

220



## JEREMIAH XIII. 23.

*Can the Ethiopian change his Skin  
or the Leopard his spots? then  
may ye also do good that are ac-  
customed to do evil.*

CONsidering the great difficulty of re-  
claiming those who are far gone in  
an evil course, it is no more than needs  
to use all sorts of Arguments to this pur-  
pose: From the consideration of the evil  
of sin, and of the goodness of God and  
his wonderfull patience and long-suffering  
towards us in the midst of our infinite  
Provocations: From his great mercy and  
pity declared to us in all those gracious  
means and methods which he useth for  
our recovery: And from his readiness and  
forwardness after all our Rebellions to re-  
ceive us upon our Repentance, and to be  
perfectly reconciled to us as if we had  
never offended him: And from the final

issue and event of a wicked life, the dismal and endless miseries of another World, into which we shall inevitably fall except we repent in time and return to a better mind: And lastly, from the danger of being hardened in an evil course, past all remedy and hopes of Repentance.

And yet I am very sensible that to discourse to Men of the impossibility, or at least the extreme difficulty, of rescuing themselves out of this miserable state seems to be an odd and cross kind of Argument, and more apt to drive people to despair than to gain them to repentance.

But since the Spirit of God is pleased to make use of it to this purpose, we may safely rely upon infinite Wisdom for the fitness of it to awaken sinners to a sense of their condition, in order to their recovery. For here in the Text, after terrible threatnings of Captivity and desolation to the People of the Jews, who were extremely wicked and degenerate, thorough an universal depravation of manners in all ranks of men from the highest to the lowest, so that they seemed to stand upon the brink of ruine, and to be fatally devoted to it; to add to the terrour and force of these threatnings, God by his Prophet represents

sents to them the infinite danger and extreme difficulty of their case, to see if he could startle them by telling them into what a desperate condition they had plunged themselves; being by a long custom of sinning so far engaged in an evil course, that they had almost cut off themselves from a possibility of retreat; so that the difficulty of their change seemed next to a natural impossibility. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin or the Leopard his Spots: then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

The Expression is very high, and it is to be hoped somewhat Hyperbolicall, and above the just meaning of the words. Which are, I think, onely designed to signify to us the extreme difficulty of making this change; which is therefore resembled to a natural impossibility, as coming very near it, though not altogether up to it.

And that this Expression is thus to be mitigated, will appear more than probable, by considering some other like passages of Scripture. As, where our Saviour compares the difficulty of a rich Man's Salvation to that which is naturally impossible, *viz. to a Camel's passing thorough the eye of a Needle*: Nay, he pitcheth

his expression higher, and doth not onely make it a thing of equal but of greater difficulty; I say unto you, it is easier for a Camel to go thorough the eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God. And yet when he comes to explain this to his Disciples, he tells them that he onely meant that the thing was very difficult, how hard is it for those that have riches to be saved? and that it was not absolutely impossible, but speaking according to humane probability: with Men this is impossible, but not with God.

And thus also it is reasonable to understand that severe passage of the Apostle, Heb. 6. 4. It is impossible for them that were once enlightened, if they fall away, to renew them again to Repentance. It is impossible, that is, it is very difficult.

In like manner we are to understand this high Expression in the Text, Can the Ethiopian change his Skin or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil; that is, this moral change of men, settled and fixed in bad habits, is almost as difficult as the other.

From the words thus explained two things will properly fall under our Consideration.

First,

*First*, The great difficulty of reforming vicious habits or of changing a bad course, to those who have been deeply engaged in it and long accustomed to it.

*Secondly*, Notwithstanding the great difficulty of the thing, what ground of hope and encouragement there is left that it may be done. So that notwithstanding the appearing harshness of the Text, the result of my discourse will be, not to discourage any, how bad soever, from attempting this change, but to put them upon it and to persuade them to it, and to remove out of the way that which may seem to be one of the strongest Objections against all endeavours of men very bad, to become better.

I. *First*, The great difficulty of reforming vicious habits, or of changing a bad course, to those who have been deeply engaged in it and long accustomed to it. And this difficulty ariseth, partly from the general nature of habits indifferently considered whether they be good, or bad, or indifferent; partly, from the particular nature of evil and vicious habits; and partly, from the natural and judicial consequences of a great progress and long continuance in an evil course.

By

I.

By the consideration of these three particulars, the extreme difficulty of this change, together with the true causes and reasons of it, will fully appear.

I. It we consider the nature of all Habits, whether good, or bad, or indifferent. The custom and frequent practice of any thing begets in us a facility and easiness in doing it. It bends the powers of our Soul, and turns the stream and current of our animal Spirits such a way, and gives all our faculties a tendency and pliability to such a sort of actions. And when we have long stood bent one way, we grow settled and confirmed in it; and cannot without great force and violence be restored to our former state and condition. For the perfection of any habit whether good, or bad, induceth a kind of necessity of acting accordingly. A rooted habit becomes a governing Principle, and bears almost an equal sway in us with that which is natural. It is a kind of a new nature superinduced, and even as hard to be expelled as some things which are Primitively and Originally natural. When we bend a thing at first it will endeavour to restore it self; but it may be held bent so long till it will continue so of it self and grow crooked; and then  
it



it may require more force and violence to reduce it to its former straightness than we used to make it crooked at first. This is the nature of all habits, the farther we proceed the more we are confirmed in them: and that which at first we did voluntarily, by degrees becomes so natural and necessary that it is almost impossible for us to do otherwise. This is plainly seen in the experience of every day, in things good and bad, both in lesser and greater matters.

2. This difficulty ariseth more especially from the particular nature of evil and vitious habits. These, because they are suitable to our corrupt nature, and conspire with the inclinations of it, are likely to be of a much quicker growth and improvement, and in a shorter space, and with less care and endeavour, to arrive at maturity and strength, than the habits of grace and goodness. Considering the propension of our depraved nature, the progress of vertue and goodness is up the hill, in which we not onely move hardly and heavily, but are easily roll'd back: but by wickedness and vice we move downwards; which, as it is much quicker and easier, so is it harder for us to stop in that course, and infinitely more difficult to return from it.

Not





Not but that at first a sinner hath some considerable checks and restraints upon him, and meets with several rubs and difficulties in his way; the shame and unreasonableness of his vices, and the trouble and disquiet which they create to him. But he breaks loose from these restraints, and goes over these difficulties by degrees; and the faster and farther he advanceth in an evil course the less trouble still they give him, till at last they almost quite lose their force, and give him little or no disturbance.

Shame also is a great restraint upon sinners at first, but that soon falls off: and when men have once lost their innocence, their modesty is not like to be long troublesome to them. For impudence comes on with vice, and grows up with it. Let fer vices do not banish all shame and modesty, but great and abominable crimes harden mens foreheads and make them shameless. *Were they ashamed* (saith the Prophet) *when they committed abomination, nay they were not ashamed, neither could they blush.* When men have the heart to do a very bad thing they seldom want the face to bear it out.

And

And as for the unreasonableness of vice, though nothing in the World be more evident to a free and impartial judgment, and the sinner himself discerns it clearly enough at his first setting out in a wicked course,

*Vide meliora; probique,  
Deteriora sequor.*

He offends against the light of his own mind, and does wickedly when he knows better: Yet after he hath continued for some time in this course and is heartily engaged in it, his foolish heart is darkened, and the notions of good and evil are obscured and confounded, and things appear to him in a false and imperfect light: His lusts do at once blind and byals his understanding; and his judgment by degrees goes over to his inclinations; and he cannot think that there should be so much reason against those things for which he hath so strong an affection. He is now engaged in a Party, and factiously concerned to maintain it, and to make the best of it: and to that end, he bends all his wits to advance such principles as are fittest to justify his wicked practices; and in all debates plainly fa-  
vours

vours that side of the Question which will give the greatest countenance and encouragement to them. When men are corrupt and do abominable works, they say in their hearts there is no God, that is, they would fain think so. And every thing serves for an Argument to a willing mind; and every little objection appears strong and considerable, which makes against that which men are loth should be true.

Not that any man ever satisfied himself in the Principles of Infidelity, or was able to arrive to a steady and unshaken persuasion of the truth of them, so as not vehemently to doubt and fear the contrary. However, by this means many men though they cannot fully comfort, yet they make a shift to cheat themselves; to still their Consciences and lay them asleep for a time, so as not to receive any great and frequent disturbance in their course from the checks and rebukes of their own minds. And when these restraints are removed, the work of iniquity goes on a main, being favoured both by wind and tide.

3. The difficulty of this change ariseth likewise from the natural and judicial consequences of a great progress and long

con-

continuance in an evil course. My meaning is, that inveterate evil habits do partly from their own nature, and partly from the just judgment and permission of God, put men under several disadvantages of moving effectually towards their own recovery.

By a long custome of sinning mens Consciences grow brawny, and *seared as it were with a hot iron*; and by being often trampled upon they become hard as the beaten road. So that unless it be upon some extraordinary occasion, they are seldom awakened to a sense of their guilt. And when mens hearts are thus hard, the best counsels make but little impression upon them. For they are steel'd against reproof, and impenetrable to good advice; which is therefore seldom offered to them, even by those that wish them well, because they know it to be both unacceptable, and unlikely to prevail. It requires a great deal of good nature in a very bad man, to be able patiently to bear to be told of his faults.

Besides, that habitual wickedness is naturally apt to banish consideration, to weaken our resolution, and to discourage our hopes both of God's grace and assistance, and of his mercy and forgiveness; which

which are the best means and encouragement to repentance.

Sin is a great enemy to *Consideration* and especially when men are deeply plunged into it, their condition is so very bad, that they are loth to think of it and to search into it. A vicious man is a very deformed sight, and to none more than to himself; and therefore he loves to turn his Eyes another way, and to divert them as much as he can from looking upon himself. He is afraid to be alone, lest his own mind should arrest him, and his Conscience should take the opportunity to call him to an account. And if at any time his own thoughts meet with him, and he cannot avoid consideration, he is ready to say as *Ahab* did to *Elijah*, *hast thou found me, O my enemy!* and is as glad to shake it off as a man is to get rid of a Creditor, whom because he knows not how to satisfy, he cares not to speak with him. Consideration is the great troubler and disturber of men in an evil course, because it would represent to them the plain truth of their case; and therefore they do all they can to keep it off, as those who have improvidently managed their affairs, and been ill husbands of their estates, are loth to make

make up their accounts, lest by that means they should be forced to understand the worst of their condition.

Or if consideration happen to take them at an advantage, and they are so hard prest by it that they cannot escape the sight of their own condition, yet they find themselves so miserably entangled and hamper'd in an evil course, and bound so fast in the chains of their own wickedness, that they know not how to get loose. Sin is the saddest slavery in the World; it breaks and sinks mens Spirits, and makes them so base and servile that they have not the courage to rescue themselves. No sort of slaves are so poor spirited as they that are in bondage to their lusts. Their power is gone, or if they have any left they have not the heart to make use of it. And though they see and feel their misery, yet they chuse rather to sit down in it, and tamely to submit to it, than to make any resolute attempt for their Liberty. What the Prophet says of *whoredom* and *wine* is proportionably true of other vices, *they take away the heart*. Every lust that we entertain deals with us as *Dalilah* did with *Sampson*, not only robs us of our strength but leaves us fast bound: so that if at a-

Hh

ny



ny time we be awakened to a sense of our condition, and try to rescue our selves from it, we find that our strength is departed from us, and that we are not able to break loose.

And as long, custom and continuance in sin deprives us of our strength, so it discourageth our hopes, both of Gods grace and assistance, and of his mercy and forgiveness. For why should men expect the continuance of that grace which they have so often received in vain? After so many provocations, how can we look the offended Majesty of God in the face? how can we lift up our eyes to heaven with any hopes of mercy and forgiveness there? Despair doth almost naturally spring from an evil Conscience: and when men are thoroughly awakened to a sense of sin, and of the infinite evil of it, as they cannot easily forgive themselves, so they can hardly believe that there is goodness enough any where to forgive them.

But besides these disadvantages, which are natural and consequent upon a vicious course; by the just judgment of God, his Spirit is withdrawn from them, and they are given up to their own hearts lusts, to commit all iniquity with greediness. And then there is hardly a

ny



ny thing left, either to restrain them in their evil course, or to recover them out of it.

And not only so, but by the just permission of God, as men grow worse and more wicked, the Devil hath a nearer access to them and a more immediate power over them. So the *Scripture* tells us, that wicked men are *led captive by Satan at his pleasure*, and that the *evil* *one* *works* and *acts in the Children of disobedience*: They are as it were possessed and inspired by him. And what can be expected from this cruel and malicious enemy of mankind, but that he will continually be pushing them on from one wickedness to another, till he drive them first into despair, and then, if God permit him, into eternal perdition?

And what a forlorn state is this? when men are thus forsaken of God, and left without check, blindly and headily to follow the sway of their own tempers, and the bent of their own corrupt hearts? When they are continually exposed to temptations strongly inviting them to evil; and God lets the Devil loose upon them to manage those temptations with his utmost skill, and to practise all his arts and wiles upon them? In these cir-

cumstances men almost infallibly run in-  
to sin, as sure as men wander in the dark,  
and are in danger of falling in slippery  
places, and of being entangled when they  
continually walk in the midst of snares  
cunningly laid for them. It is not in men  
thus disabled and entangled, to order  
their own steps, and to restrain their in-  
clinations and passions in the presence of  
a powerfull temptation. At the best, we  
need God's direction to guide us, his con-  
tinual grace to uphold us, and to guard  
and preserve us from evil; and much  
more do we stand in need of it, when we  
have brought our selves into these wretch-  
ed circumstances; but then alas! how  
little reason have we to hope for it?

Blind and miserable men! that in des-  
pite of all the mercifull warnings of God's  
word and providence, will run themselves  
into this desperate state, and never think  
of returning to a better mind, till their  
retreat is difficult almost to an impossibili-  
ty. I proceed to the

II. Head of my Discourse, which was  
to shew that the case of these persons,  
though it be extremely difficult, is not  
quite desperate; but after all, there is  
some ground of hope and encouragement  
left

left that they may yet be reclaimed and brought to goodness. Indeed humanely speaking, and according to all appearance and probability, the thing seems to be very hopeless, and next to an impossibility; but yet what our *Saviour* says concerning the difficulty of a rich man's Salvation will reach also to this case, though much more difficult; *those things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

And this will appear, if we consider that even in the worst of men there is something left which tends to reclaim them, to awaken them to consideration, and to urge and encourage them to a vigorous resolution of a better course: And this accompanied with a powerfull assistance of God's grace, which when sincerely sought is never to be despaired of, may prove effectual to bring back even the greatest of sinners.

1. There is left, even in the worst of men, a natural sense of the evil and unreasonable of sin; which can hardly be ever totally extinguished in humane nature. For though the habits of great vices are very apt to harden and stupify men, so that they have seldom a just sense of their evil ways, yet these persons are some-

Hh 3

times

times under strong convictions, and their consciences do severely check and rebuke them for their faults. They are also, by fits, under great apprehension of the danger of their condition, and that the course which they are in, if they continue in it, will prove fatal to them, and ruin them at last: Especially, when their consciences are thoroughly awakened, by some great affliction, or the near approach of death and a lively sense of another World. And the apprehension of a mighty danger will make men to look about them, and to use the best means to avoid it.

2. Very bad men when they have any thoughts of becoming better are apt to conceive some good hopes of God's grace and mercy. For though they find all the causes and reasons of despair in themselves, yet the consideration of the boundless goodness and compassions of God (how undeserved soever on their part) is apt to kindle some sparks of hope, even in the most desponding mind. His wonderfull patience, in the midst of our manifold provocations, cannot but be a good sign to us, that he hath no mind that we should perish, but rather that we should come to repentance; and

if we do repent, we are assured by his promise, that we shall be forgiven. *He that confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall have mercy.* If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Who knows what men thoroughly roused and startled may resolve, and do? And a mighty resolution will break through difficulties which seem insuperable. Though we be weak and pitiful Creatures; yet nature when it is mightily irritated and stir'd will do strange things. The resolutions of men upon the brink of despair have been of an incredible force: and the Soul of man in nothing more discovers its divine power and original, than in that spring which is in it whereby it recovers it self when it is mightily urged and prest. There is a sort of resolution which is in a manner invincible, and hardly any difficulty can resist it or stand before it.

Of this there have been great instances in several kinds. Some by an obstinate resolution, and taking incredible pains with themselves, have mastered great natural vices and defects. As *Socrates* and *Demosthenes*, who almost exceeded all mankind in those two things

for which by nature they seemed to be least made, and most unfit. One, in governing of his passions, and the other in the mighty force and power of his eloquence.

Some, that by intemperance have brought themselves to a dropfie, which hath just set them upon the brink of the grave, by a bold and steady purpose to abstain wholly from drink for a long time together, have rescued themselves from the jaws of death.

Some that had almost ruined themselves by a careless and dissolute life, and having run themselves out of their estates into debt, and being cast into prison, have there taken up a manly resolution to retrieve and recover themselves; and by the indefatigable labour and study of some years, in that uncomfortable retreat, have mastered the knowledge and skill of one of the most difficult Professions, in which they have afterwards proved great and eminent.

And some, in the full carriere of a wicked course, have by a sudden thought and resolution, raised in them and assisted by a mighty grace of God, taken up presently and made an immediate change from great wickedness and impiety of life



to a very exemplary degree of goodness and virtue.

The two great encouragements to virtue which *Pythagoras* gave to his Scholars were these; and they were worthy of so great a Philosopher; *First. Chuse always the best course of life, and custome will soon make it the most pleasant.* The other was this, that *Power and Necessity are Neighbours and never dwell far from one another.* When men are prest by a great necessity, when nature is spurr'd up and urged to the utmost, men discover in themselves a power which they thought they had not, and find at last that they can do that which at first they despaired of ever being able to do.

4. The grace and assistance of God when sincerely sought, is never to be despaired of. So that if we do but heartily and in good earnest resolve upon a better course and implore the help of God's grace to this purpose, no degree of it that is necessary shall be wanting to us. And here is our chief ground of hope. For we are *weak and unstable as water*; and when we have taken up good resolutions do easily start from them. So that fresh supplies and a continued assistance of God's grace is necessary to keep up



up the first warmth and vigour of our resolutions, till they prove effectual and victorious. And this grace God hath promised he will not deny to us, when we are thus disposed for it: that he will give his *H. Spirit* to them that ask it; that he will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, untill he bring forth judgment unto victory.

All that now remains is to apply this to our selves: And we are all concerned in it. For we shall all find our selves comprehended under one of these three Heads. Either we are of the number of those few happy Persons, who by the influence and advantage of a good education were never engaged in a bad course: Or of those who have been drawn into vice, but are not yet far gone in it: or, of those who have been long accustomed to an evil course, and are grown old and stiff in it.

The first of these have great cause to thank God for this singular felicity, that they were never ensnared and intangled in vicious habits; that they have not had the trial of their own weakness under this miserable slavery, that they never knew what it was to be out of their own power, to have lost their liberty and the Govern-

Government of themselves. When we hear of the miserable servitude of the poor Christians in *Turkey* we are apt, as there is great reason to pity them, and to think what a blessing of God it is to us that we are not in their condition: And yet *that* slavery is not comparable to *this*, either for the sad nature, or the dismal consequences of it; or for the difficulty of being released from it. And let such Persons, who have been thus happy never to have been engaged in an evil course, preserve their innocency with great tenderness and care, as the greatest Jewel in the World. No Man knows what he do's, and what a foundation of trouble he lays to himself, when he forfeits his innocency, and breaks the peace of his own mind; when he yields to a Temptation, and makes the first step into a bad course. He little thinks whither his lusts may hurry him, and what a monster they may make of him before they have done with him.

2. Those who have been seduced, but are not yet deeply engaged in an evil course, let them make a speedy retreat, lest they put it for ever out of their power to return. Perhaps their feet only are yet ensnared, but their hands are at liberty,

liberty, and they have some power left, whereby with an ordinary grace of God they may loose and rescue themselves. But after a while their hands may be manacled, and all their power may be gone; and when they are thus *bound hand and foot*, they are just prepared, and in danger every moment, *to be cast into utter darkness.*

3. As for those, who are gone very far and are grown old in vice, who can forbear to lament over them? for they are a sad spectacle indeed, and the truest object of pity in the World. And yet, *their recovery is not utterly to be despair'd of; for with God it is possible.* The spirit of God, which hath withdrawn himself, or rather hath been driven away by them, may yet be persuaded to return and to undertake them once more, if they would but seriously resolve upon a change, and heartily beg God's assistance to that purpose. If we would take up a mighty resolution, we might hope that God would afford a miraculous grace to second it, and make it effectual to our recovery. Even in this perverse and degenerate Age, in which we live, God hath not been wanting to give some miraculous instances of his grace and mercy to sinners,

ners, and those perhaps equal to any of those we meet with in Scripture, of *Manasses*, or *Mary Magdalen*, or the *penitent Thief*; both for the greatness of the offenders, and the miracle of their change: To the end that none might despair, and for want of the encouragement of an example equal to their own case, be disheartened from so noble an enterprize. I am loth to put you in mind how bad some have been, who yet have been *snatched as Firebrands out of the fire*; and that in so strange a manner, that it would even amaze a Man to think of the wonder of their recovery: those who have sunk themselves into the very depth of infidelity and wickedness, have by a mighty hand and out-stretched arm of God been pluckt out of this horrible Pit. And will we still stand it out with God, when such great Leaders have given up the cause, and have surrendred and yielded up themselves willing Captives to the grace of God: that omnipotent grace of God, which can easily subdue the stoutest heart of Man, by letting in so strong a light upon our minds, and pouring such terrible convictions into our consciences, that we can find no ease but in turning to God.

I hope

I hope there are none here so bad, as to need all the encouragement to repentance which such examples might give them: encouragement I say to repentance: for surely these examples can encourage no Man to venture any farther in a wicked course: they are so very rare, and like the instances of those who have been brought back to life after the sentence of death seemed to have been fully executed upon them.

But perhaps some will not believe that there have been such examples; or if there have, they impute all this either to a disturbed imagination, or to the faint and low spirits of Men under great bodily weakness; or to their natural cowardize and fear; or to I know not what foolish and fantastical design of completing and finishing a wicked life with an hypocritical death. Nothing surely is easier than to put some bad construction upon the best things, and so flur even repentance it self, and almost dash it out of countenance by some bold, and perhaps witty saying about it. But oh that Men were wise; oh that Men were wise! that they understood, and would consider their latter end! Come, let us neither trifle, nor dissemble in this matter; I dare say every  
man's

man's Conscience is convinced, that they who have led very ill lives have so much reason for repentance, that we may easily believe it to be real. However, of all things in the world, let us not make a mock of repentance, that which must be our last sanctuary and refuge, and which we must all come to before we dye, or it had been better for us we had never been born. Therefore, let my counsel be acceptable unto you, break off your sins by repentance, and your iniquities by righteousness: And that instantly, and without delay; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. If we have been enslaved but a little to a vicious course, we shall find it a task difficult enough to assert our own liberty, to break these bonds in sunder and to cast these cords from us. But if we have been long under this bondage, we have done so much to undoe our selves, and to make our case desperate, that it is God's infinite mercy to us that there is yet hope. Therefore, give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while you look for light, he turn it into darkness and the shadow of death. I will conclude with that encouraging invitation, even to the greatest



rest of sinners, to repentance, from the mouth of God himself, *Isa. 55.* *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your Soul shall live: seek the Lord while he may be found; and call upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.*

To him let us apply our selves, and humbly beseech him who is mighty to save, that he would stretch forth the right hand of his power for our deliverance, from this miserable and cruel bondage of our lusts; and that as the rain cometh down from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud; so he would grant that his word may not return void, but accomplish his pleasure, and prosper in the thing to which he sent it; For his mercy sake in Jesus Christ, To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever. Amen.

Matt

cher  
And  
Sect  
other  
in the  
fed S  
and A  
the m  
Churc  
writte  
of God



## MATTHEW XXIII. 13.

*Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees,  
Hypocrites; for ye shut up the  
Kingdom of Heaven against  
Men; and ye neither go in your  
selves, neither suffer ye them that  
are entring to go in.*

**T**H E Scribes so often mentioned  
in the Gospel, were the great Do-  
ctors among the Jews, the Tea-  
chers and Interpreters of the Law of God.  
And because many of them were of the  
Sect of the *Pharisees*, which above all  
others pretended to skill and knowledge  
in the Law, therefore it is that our blef-  
sed Saviour do's so often put the *Scribes*  
and *Pharisees* together. And these were  
the men of chief Authority in the Jewish  
Church; who equalled their own un-  
written word and traditions with the Law  
of God: Nay our Saviour tells us, *they*  
made

*made the Commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. They did in effect assume to themselves infallibility; and all that opposed and contradicted them they branded with the odious name of Hereticks. Against these our Saviour denounceth this Woe here in the Text, Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites, for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, &c.*

All the difficulty in the words is, what is here meant by *shutting up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men*: St. Luke expresseth it more plainly, *ye have taken away the key of knowledge, ye entred not in your selves, and them that were entring in, ye hindered.* By putting these two expressions together we shall the more easily come at the meaning of the Text. *We have taken away the key of knowledge, and have shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men.* This Metaphor of *the key of knowledge* is undoubtedly an allusion to that known custome among the Jews in the admission of their Doctors. For to whatsoever they gave Authority to interpret the Law and the Prophets, they were solemnly admitted into that office by delivering to them a *Key* and a *Table-book*. So that by the *key of knowledge* is here meant

meant the interpretation and understanding of the Scriptures; and by *taking away the key of knowledge*, not only that they arrogated to themselves alone the understanding of the Scriptures, but likewise that they had conveyed away this key of knowledge, and as it were hid it out of the way, neither using it themselves as they ought, nor suffering others to make use of it.

And thus they *shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men*; which is very fitly said of those who have locked the door against them that were going in, and have taken away the key. By all which it appears that the plain meaning of our *Saviour* in these Metaphorical expressions is, that the *Scribes* and Teachers of the Law, under a pretence of interpreting the Scriptures, had perverted them and kept the true knowledge of them from the People: Especially those Prophecies of the *Old Testament* which concerned the *Messias*. And by this means the Kingdom of Heaven was shut against men: And they not only rejected the truth themselves, but by keeping men in ignorance of the true meaning of the Scriptures, they hindered many from embracing our *Saviour's* Doctrine, and entering into the Kingdom of

Heaven, who were otherwise well enough disposed for it.

Having thus explained the words, I shall from the main scope and design of them observe to you these two things.

1. The Necessity of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures in order to our eternal Salvation. It is called by our Saviour *the key of knowledge*, that which lets men into the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. The great and inexcusable fault of those who deprive the People of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. They *shut the kingdom of heaven against men*, and do what in them lies to hinder their eternal Salvation; and therefore our Saviour denounceth so heavy a woe against them.

I shall speak briefly to these two *Observations*; and then apply them to those who are principally concerned in them.

I. *First*, I observe hence the Necessity of the knowledge of the holy Scriptures in order to our eternal Salvation. This is by our Saviour called *the key of knowledge*, that which lets men into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Knowledge is necessary to Religion: It is necessary to the Being of it; and necessary to the life and practice of it.

*Without*

*Without Faith* (says the *Apostle*) *it is impossible to please God*; Because Faith is an act of the understanding, and do's necessarily suppose some knowledge and apprehension of what we believe. To all acts of Religion there is necessarily required some act of the Understanding; so that without knowledge there can be no devotion in the service of God, no obedience to his Laws. Religion begins in the Understanding, and from thence descends upon the heart and life. *If ye know these things* (says our *Saviour*) *happy are ye if ye do them.* We must first know God, before we can worship him; and understand what is his will, before we can do it.

This is so very evident, that one would think there needed no discourse about it. And yet there are some in the World that cry up Ignorance as the Mother of Devotion. And to shew that we do not wrong them in this matter, Mr. *Rushworth* in his *Dialogues* (a Book in great vogue among the *Papists* here in *England*) does expressly reckon up Ignorance among the *Parents of Religion*. And can any thing be said more absurdly and more to the disparagement of Religion, than to derive the pedigree of the most excellent thing in

the world from so obscure and ignoble an Original; and to make that which the Scripture calls *the beginning of wisdom*, and *the excellency of knowledge*, to be the Off-spring of Ignorance and a Child of darkness? Ignorance indeed may be the cause of wonder and admiration, and the mother of folly and superstition: But surely Religion is of a nobler Extraction, and is the issue and result of the best wisdom and knowledge; and descends from above, from the giver of every good and perfect gift, even the father of lights.

And as knowledge in general is necessary to Religion, so more particularly the knowledge of the *holy Scriptures* is necessary to our eternal Salvation. Because these are the great and standing Revelation of God to mankind; wherein the Nature of God, and his Will concerning our duty and the terms and conditions of our eternal happiness in another World are fully and plainly declared to us.

The Scriptures are the Word of God; and from whence can we learn the will of God so well as from his own mouth? They are the great instrument of our Salvation; and should not every man be acquainted with that which alone can perfectly instruct him what he must believe,  
and



and what he must do that he may be saved? This is the testimony which the Scripture gives of it self, that it is *able to make men wise unto salvation*. And is it not very fit that every man should have this wisdom, and in order thereunto the free use of that *Book* from whence this wisdom is to be learned?

II. *Secondly*, I observe the great and inexcusable fault of those who keep men in Ignorance of Religion, and take away from them so excellent and necessary a means of divine knowledge as the *H. Scriptures* are. This our *Saviour* calls *taking away the key of knowledge, and shutting the Kingdom of Heaven against Men*, That is, doing what in them lies to render it impossible for men to be saved. For this he denounceth a terrible *Woe* against the Teachers of the *Jewish Church*: Though they did not proceed so far as to deprive men of the use of the *H. Scriptures*, but only of the right knowledge and understanding of them. This alone is a horrible impiety, to lead men into a false sense and interpretation of Scripture; but much greater to forbid them the reading of it. This is to stop knowledge at the very Fountain-head; and not only to

II.



lead men into Errour, but to take away from them all possibility of rectifying their mistakes. And can there be a greater sacrilege, than to rob men of the word of God, the best means in the world of acquainting them with the will of God and their duty, and the way to eternal happiness? To keep the people in Ignorance of that which is necessary to save them, is to judge them unworthy of eternal life, and to declare it do's not belong to them, and maliciously to contrive the eternal ruine and destruction of their Souls.

To lock up the *Scriptures* and the *Service of God* from the people in an unknown tongue, what is this but in effect to forbid men to know God and to serve him; to render them incapable of knowing what is the good and acceptable will of God; of joyning in his worship, or performing any part of it, or receiving any benefit or edification from it? And what is, if this be not, to shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men? This is so outrageous a cruelty to the souls of men, that it is not to be excused upon any pretence whatsoever: This is to take the surest and most effectual way in the world to destroy those for whom Christ dyed, and directly to thwart

thwart the great design of God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Men may miscarry with their knowledge, but they are sure to perish for want of it.

The best things in the world have their inconveniences attending them, and are liable to be abused; but surely men are not to be ruined and damned for fear of abusing their knowledge, or for the prevention of any other inconvenience whatsoever. Besides, this is to cross the very end of the Scriptures, and the design of God in inspiring men to write them. Can any man think that God should send this great light of his Word into the world, for the Priests to *hide it under a bushel*; and not rather that it should be set up to the greatest advantage for the enlightening of the world? St. Paul tells us, *Rom. 15. 4. That whatsoever things were written, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* And *2 Tim. 3. 16. That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and is profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.* And if the Scriptures were written for these ends, can any man have the face to pretend that they do not concern

cern the people as well as their teachers? Nay St. *Paul* expressly tells the Church of *Rome*, that they were written for their learning, however it happens that they are not now permitted to make use of them. Are the *Scriptures* so usefull and profitable for Doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness? and why may they not be used by the people for those ends for which they were given? 'Tis true indeed they are fit for the most knowing and learned, and sufficient to make *the man of God perfect, and thoroughly furnished to every good work* (as the *Apostle* there tells us). But do's this exclude their being profitable also to the people; who may reasonably be presumed to stand much more in need of all means and helps of instruction than their Teachers? And though there be many difficulties and obscurities in the *Scriptures*, enough to exercise the skill and wit of the learned, yet are they not therefore either useless or dangerous to the people. The ancient *Fathers* of the Church were of another mind. St. *Chrysostome* tells us that, "Whatever things are necessary are manifest in the *Scriptures*." And St. *Austin*, that all things are plain in the *Scripture*, which concern

"saith

“faith and a good life; and that those  
“things which are necessary to the Sal-  
“vation of men, are not so hard to be  
“come at, but that as to those things  
“which the Scripture plainly contains,  
“it speaks without disguise like a familiar  
“friend to the heart of the learned and  
“unlearned. And upon these and such  
like considerations, the *Fathers* did every  
where in their *Orations* and *Homilies* charge  
and exhort the people to be conversant in  
the holy Scriptures, to read them daily  
and diligently and attentively. And I  
challenge our *Adversaries* to shew me  
where any of the ancient *Fathers* do dis-  
courage the people from reading the Scri-  
ptures, much less forbid them so to do.  
So that they who do it now have no  
Cloak for their sin: And they who pre-  
tend so confidently to *Antiquity* in other  
cases, are by the evidence of truth for-  
ced to acknowledge that it is against them  
in this. Though they have ten thousand  
*Schoolmen* on their side, yet have they  
not one *Father*, not the least pretence of  
Scripture or rag of antiquity to cover  
their nakedness in this point.

With great reason then does our *Savi-*  
*our* denounce so heavy a *Woe* against such  
teachers. Of old in the like case God  
by

by his Prophet severely threatens the Priests of the Jewish Church, for not instructing the people in the knowledge of God, *Hosea 4. 6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee; thou shalt be no more a Priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy Children.* God, you see, lays the ruine of so many Souls at their doors, and will require their blood at their hands. So many as perish for want of knowledge, and eternally miscarry by being deprived of the necessary means of Salvation, their destruction shall be charged upon those who have taken away the key of knowledge, and shut the kingdom of heaven against men.

And it is just with God to punish such persons, not only as the occasion, but as the Authours of their ruine. For who can judge otherwise, but that they who deprive men of the necessary means to any end, do purposely design to hinder them of attaining that end. And whatever may be pretended in this case; to deprive men of the holy Scriptures, and to keep them ignorant of the service of God, and yet while they do so, to make a shew of an earnest desire of their Salvation, is just  
such

such a mockery, as if one of you that is a master should tell his prentice how much you desire he should thrive in the world, and be a rich man; but all the while keeps him ignorant of his trade in order to his being rich; and with the strictest care imaginable conceals from him the best means of learning that whereby alone he is likely to thrive and get an estate. *Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites.*

By what hath been discoursed upon this Argument, you will easily perceive where the Application is like to fall. For the *Woe* denounced by our *Saviour* here in the *Text* against the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, falls every whit as heavy upon the *Pastours* and *Teachers* of the *Roman Church*. They have taken away the key of knowledge with a witness; not only depriving the people of the right understanding of the *Scriptures*, but of the very use of them: As if they were so afraid they should understand them, that they dare not suffer them so much as to be acquainted with them.

This Tyranny that Church hath exercised over those of her Communion for several hundreds of years. It grew upon them indeed by degrees: For as by the  
inun-



inundation of *Barbarous Nations* upon the *Roman Empire* the *Romans* lost their Language by degrees, so the Governours of that Church still kept up the Scriptures and the service of God in the *Latin tongue*; which at last was wholly unknown to the common people. And about the *ninth* and *tenth Centuries*, when by the general consent of all their own *Historians* gross darkness and ignorance covered this part of the world, the *Pope* and the *Priests* took away the *key of knowledge*, and did (as I may so say) put it under the door for several Ages; till the *Reformation* fetched it out again, and rubbed off the rust of it.

And I profess seriously that hardly any thing in the world was ever to me more astonishing, than this uncharitable and cruel usage of the people in the Church of *Rome*. And I cannot tell which to wonder at most, the insolence of their Governours in imposing upon men this senseless way of serving of God, or the patience shall I call it, or rather stupidity of the people in enduring to be so intolerably abused. Why should reasonable creatures be treated at this rude and barbarous rate? As if they were unworthy to be acquainted with the will of God;  
and



and as if that which every man ought to do, were not fit for every man to know : As if the common people had only Bodies to be present at the service of God, but no Souls; or as if they were all distracted and out of their wits, and it were a dangerous thing to let in the light upon them.

But to speak more distinctly. There are *two* things we charge them withall, and which they are not able to deny. Their performing the publick *service of God* in an unknown Tongue; and depriving the People of the use of the *Scriptures*. And I shall first tell you what we have to say against these things, and then consider what they pretend for them.

1. As for their performing the service of God in a tongue unknown to the People. And I begin with *St. Paul*, who in his first *Epistle* to the *Corinthians* hath a whole *Chapter* on purpose to shew the unreasonableness of this thing, and how contrary it is to the edification of *Christians*. His discourse is so plain and so well known, that I shall not particularly insist upon it. *Erasmus*, in his *Annotat-ions* upon this *Chapter*, breaks out (as well he might) into admiration at the practice of the Church of *Rome* in his time.

time. *Hæc in re mirum quam mutata sit Ecclesiæ consuetudo*: "It is wonderfull  
 " (says he) how the custom of the Church  
 " is altered in this matter. St. Paul had  
 " rather speak five words with understand-  
 " ing, and so as to teach others, than ten  
 " thousand in an unknown tongue. Why  
 " does the Church doubt to follow so  
 " great an Authority, or rather how  
 " dares she to dissent from it?

As for the practice of the ancient Church let *Origen* bear witness "The  
 " *Grecians* (saith he) in their prayers use  
 " the *Greek*, and the *Romans* the *Latin*  
 " tongue; and so every one according  
 " to his Language prayeth unto God;  
 " and praiseth him as he is able.

And not only in *Origen's* time, but for more than the first six hundred years, the service of God was always performed, in a known Tongue. And this the learned men of their own Church do not deny. And Cardinal *Cajetan* (as *Cassander* tells us) said it was much better this Custom were restored; and being reprov'd for saying so, he said he learned it from St. Paul. And *Bellarmino* himself confesseth that the *Armenians*, *Egyptians*, *Ethiopi-ans*, *Russians*, and others do use their own Language in their Liturgies at this day.

But

But it is otherwise now in the Church of *Rome*, and hath been for several Ages: And it seems they lay great stress upon it, not only as a thing of great Use, but Necessity. For Pope *Gregory* the VII. forbids the Prince of *Bohemia* to permit to the People the celebration of divine offices in the *Sclavonian* Tongue; and commands him to oppose them herein with all his Forces. It seems he thought it a cause worthy the fighting for: and that it were much better the People should be killed, than suffered to understand their prayers.

But let us reason this matter a little calmly with them. Is it necessary for men to understand any thing they do in Religion? And is not Prayer one of the most solemn parts of Religion? and why then should not men understand their Prayers as well as any thing else they do in Religion? Is it good that people should understand their private Prayers? that (we thank them) they allow: and why not the publick as well? Is there less of Religion in publick prayers? is God less honoured by them? or are we not as capable of being edified and of having our hearts and affections moved and excited by them? Where then lies the difference? The more

I consider it, the more I am at a loss what tolerable reason any man can give why people should not understand their publick devotions as well as their private. If men cannot heartily and devoutly pray alone, without understanding what they ask of God, no more ( say I ) can they heartily and devoutly join in the publick prayers which are made by the Priest without understanding what they are. If it be enough for the Priest to understand them, why should not the Priest only be present at them? unless the people do not meet to worship God, but only to wait upon the Priest. But by saying the Priest understands them, it seems it is better some body should understand them than not; and why is not that which is good for the Priest good for the people?

So that the true state of the *Controversie* is, whether it be fit that the people should be edified in the service of God; and whether it be fit the Church should order things contrary to edification? For it is plain that the service of God in an unknown tongue is useless and unprofitable to the People: Nay, it is evidently no publick service of God, when the Priest only understands it. For how can they be said to be *publick prayers* if the People do  
not

not join in them? and how can they join in that they do not understand? and to what purpose are *Lessons of Scripture* read, if people are to learn nothing by them? and how should they learn when they do not understand? This is as if one should pretend to teach a man *Greek*, by reading him *Lectures* every day out of an *Arabick* and *Persian* Book, of which he understands not one syllable.

II. As to their depriving the people of the use of the *Holy Scriptures*. Our blessed *Saviour* exhorts the *Jews* to *search the Scriptures*; And *St. Paul* chargeth the *Christians* that *the word of God should dwell richly in them*; And the ancient *Fathers* of the Church do most frequently and earnestly recommend to the People the reading and study of the *Scriptures*; How comes the case now to be so altered? sure the word of God is not changed; that certainly abides and continues the same for ever.

I shall by and by examine what the Church of *Rome* pretends in excuse of this Sacrilege. In the mean time I do not see what considerable Objections can be made against the People's reading of the *Scriptures*, which would not have held as well against the writing and publishing

of them at first in a Language understood by the People: As the *Old Testament* was by the *Jews*, and the *Epistles* of the *Apostles* by the *Churches* to whom they were written, and the *Gospels* both by *Jews* and *Greeks*. Were there no difficulties and obscurities then in the *Scriptures*, capable of being wrested by the unstable and unlearned? were not people then liable to error, and was there no danger of Heresie in those Times? And yet these are their great Objections against putting the *Scriptures* into the hands of the people. Which is just like their arguing against giving the Cup to the Laity from the inconveniency of their *beards*, lest some of the consecrated wine should be spilt upon them: As if *errours* and *beards* were inconveniences lately sprung up in the world, and which mankind were not liable to in the first Ages of Christianity.

But if there were the same dangers and inconveniences in all Ages, this Reason makes against the publishing of the *Scriptures* to the people at first, as much as against permitting them the use of them now. And in truth all these objections are against the *Scripture* it self: And that which the Church of *Rome* would find fault with if they durst, is, that there should be any such *Book* in the world, and that

that it should be in any bodies hands, learned or unlearned; for if it be dangerous to any, none are so capable of doing mischief with it as men of wit and learning. So that at the bottom, if they would speak out, the quarrel is against the Scriptures themselves. This is too evident by the counsel given to Pope *Julius* the III. by the Bishops met at *Bononia* to consult about the establishment of the *Roman* See: Where among other things they give this as their last advice, and as the greatest and weightiest of all, *That by all means as little of the Gospel as might be, especially in the Vulgar Tongue, should be read to the people; and that little which was in the Mass ought to be sufficient: neither should it be permitted to any mortal to read more. For so long (say they) as men were contented with that little, all things went well with them; but quite otherwise, since more was commonly read. And speaking of the Scripture, they give this remarkable testimony and commendation of it; this in short is that Book which, above all others, hath raised those tempests and whirlwinds which we were almost carried away with. And in truth, if any one diligently considers it, and compares it with*



what is done in our Church, he will find them very contrary to each other, and our Doctrine not only to be very different from it, but repugnant to it. If this be the case, they do like the rest of the Children of this world, prudently enough in their Generation: Can we blame them for being against the Scriptures, when the Scriptures are acknowledged to be so clearly against them? But surely no body that considereth these things would be of that Church, which is brought by the undeniable evidence of the things themselves to this shamefull confession, that several of their Doctrines and Practices are very contrary to the Word of God.

Much more might have been said against the practice of the Church of Rome in these two particulars, but this is sufficient.

I shall in the *second* place consider, what is pretended for them. And indeed what can be pretended in justification of so contumelious an affront to mankind, so great a Tyranny and cruelty to the Souls of men? hath God forbidden the People to look into the Scriptures? No; quite contrary. Was it the practice of the ancient Church to lay this restraint upon men; or to celebrate the service of God in an unknown Tongue? our adversaries them-

themselves have not the face to pretend this. I shall truly represent the substance of what they say in these *two* points.

I. As to the service of God in an unknown tongue they say these *four* things for themselves. I.

1. That the people do exercise a general devotion, and come with an intention to serve God; and that is accepted, though they do not particularly understand the prayers that are made, and the lessons that are read.

But is this all that is intended in the service of God? do's not St. *Paul* expressly require more? *that* the understanding of the people should be edified by the particular service that is performed? And if what is done be not particularly understood, he tells us the people are not edified, nor can say *Amen* to the prayers and thanksgivings that are put up to God; and that any man that should come in and find people serving of God in this unprofitable and unreasonable manner would conclude that they were mad.

And if there be any general devotion in the people, it is because in general they understand what they are about; and why may they not as well understand the

particular service that is performed, that so they might exercise a particular devotion. So that they are devout no farther than they understand; and consequently as to what they do not understand, had every whit as good be absent.

2. They say, the prayers are to God, and he understands them; and that is enough. But what harm were it, if all they that pray understood them also: Or indeed how can men pray to God without understanding what they ask of him? Is not prayer a part of the Christian worship? and is not that a reasonable service? and is any service reasonable that is not directed by our understandings, and accompanied with our hearts and affections?

But then what say they to the *Lessons* and Exhortations of Scripture, which are likewise read to the people in an unknown tongue? Are these directed to God, or to the people only? And are they not designed by God for their instruction; and read either to that purpose or to none? And is it possible to instruct men by what they do not understand? This is a new and wonderful way of teaching, by concealing from the people the things which they should learn.

Is

Is it not all one, as to all purposes of edification, as if the Scriptures were not read, or any thing else in the place of them? as they many times do their Legends, which the wiser sort among them do not believe when they read them. For all things are alike to them that understand none; as all things are of a colour in the dark. Ignorance knows no difference of things; it is onely knowledge that can distinguish.

3. They say that some do, at least in some measure, understand the particular prayers. If they do, that is no thanks to them. It is by accident if they are more knowing than the rest; and more than the Church either desires or intends. For if they desired it, they might order their service so, as every man might understand it.

4. They say that it is convenient that God should be served and worshipped in the same Language all the world over. Convenient for whom? For *God*, or for the *People*? Not for *God* surely. For he understands all other Languages as well as *Latin*, and for any thing we know to the contrary likes them as well. And certainly it cannot be so convenient for the *People*, because they generally under-  
derstand

derstand no Language but their own; and it is very inconvenient they should not understand what they do in the service of God. But perhaps they mean that it is convenient for the *Roman Church* to have it so; because this will look like an argument that they are the *Catholic* or universal Church, when the Language which was originally theirs shall be the universal Language in which all Nations shall serve God; and by this means also they may bring all Nations to be of their Religion, and yet make them never the wiser; and this is a very great convenience, because knowledge is a troublesome thing, and ignorance very quiet and peaceable, rendring men fit to be governed, and unfit to dispute.

II.

II. As to their depriving the people of the Scriptures, the summ of what they say may be reduced to these *three Heads*.

I. That the Church can give leave to men to read the Scriptures. But this not without great trouble and difficulty: there must be a Licence for it under the hand of the Bishop or Inquisitor, by the advice of the Priest or Confessor, concerning the fitness of the Person that desires this privilege: And we may be sure they will

will think none fit, but those of whom they have the greatest confidence and security: And whoever presumes to do it otherwise, is to be denyed absolution; which is, as much as in them lies, to damn men for presuming to read the Word of God without their leave.

And, whatever they may allow here in *England*, where they hold their people upon more slippery terms, yet this privilege is very rarely granted where they are in full possession of their power, and have the people perfectly under their Yoke.

2. They tell us they instruct the people otherwise. This indeed were something if they did it to purpose; but generally they do it very sparingly and slightly. Their Sermons are commonly made up of feigned stories and miracles of *Saints*, and exhortations to the worship of them (and especially of the blessed *Virgin*) and of their Images and Relicks. And for the truth of this I appeal to the innumerable Volumes of their *Sermons* and *Postils* in print; which I suppose are none of their worst. I am sure *Erasmus* says that in his time in several Countries the people did scarce once in half a year hear a profitable Sermon to exhort them to true piety.

ty. Indeed they allow the people some *Catechisms* and *Manuals* of devotion; and yet in many of them they have the conscience and the confidence to *steal away the second Commandment* in the face of the *eighth*.

But, to bring the matter to a point, if those helps of instruction are agreeable to the Scriptures, why are they so afraid the people should read the Scriptures? if they are not, why do they deceive and delude them?

3. They say that people are apt to wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that the promiscuous use of them hath been the great occasion of Heresies. It cannot be denyed to be the condition of the very best things in the world, that they are liable to be abused: health and light and liberty, as well as knowledge. But must all these be therefore taken away? This very inconvenience of peoples wresting the Scriptures to their own ruine St. *Peter* takes notice of in his days; but he do's not therefore forbid men the reading of them, as his more prudent Successours have done since. Suppose the reading of the Scriptures hath been the occasion of Heresies; were there ever more than in the first Ages of Christianity;



stianity; and yet neither the Apostles nor their Successours ever prescribed this remedy. But are they in earnest? must not men know the truth for fear of falling into Errour? Because men may possibly miss their way at noon-day, must they never travel but in the night, when they are sure to lose it?

And when all is done, this is not true, that Heresies have sprung from this cause. They have generally been broached by the learned, from whom the Scriptures neither were, nor could be concealed. And for this I appeal to the History and Experience of all Ages. I am well assured the ancient Fathers were of another mind. *St. Chrysostome says, if men would be conversant in the Scriptures, and attend to them, they would not only not fall into errors themselves, but rescue those that are deceived: And that the Scriptures would instruct men both in right opinions and a good life.* And *St. Hierome* more expressly to our purpose. *That infinite evils arise from the Ignorance of the Scriptures; and that from that cause the most part of Heresies have come.*

But if what they say were true, is not this to lay the blame of all the ancient Heresies upon the ill management of things  
by

by our *Saviour*, and his *Apostles*, and the holy *Fathers* of the Church for so many Ages, and their imprudent dispensing of the Scriptures to the people. This indeed is to charge the matter home; and yet this consequence is unavoidable. For the Church of *Rome* cannot justify the piety and prudence of their present practices, without accusing all these.

But the thing which they mainly rely upon as to both these practices is this. That though these things were otherwise in the *Apostles* times, and in the *Ancient Church*, yet the Church hath power to alter them according to the exigence and circumstances of time. I have purposely reserved this for the last place, because it is their last refuge; and if this fail them they are gone.

To shew the weakness of this pretence, we will, if they please, take it for granted, that the Governours of the Church have in no Age more power, than the *Apostles* had in theirs. Now *St. Paul* tells us, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. that the Authority which the *Apostles* had given them from the Lord was only *for edification but not for destruction*: And the same *St. Paul* makes it the business of a whole Chapter to shew that the performing the publick  
service

service of God, and particularly Praying in an unknown Tongue, are contrary to edification; from which premisses the conclusion is plain, That the *Apostles* themselves had no Authority to appoint the service of God to be performed in an unknown Tongue; and surely it is Arrogance for the Church in any Age to pretend to greater Authority than the *Apostles* had.

This is the summ of what our *Adversaries* say in justification of themselves in these points. And there is no doubt, but that men of wit and confidence will always make a shift to say something for any thing; and some way or other blanch over the blackest and most absurd things in the world. But I leave it to the judgment of mankind whether any thing be more unreasonable than to tell men in effect, that it is fit they should understand as little of Religion as is possible; that God hath published a very dangerous Book, with which it is not safe for the people to be familiarly acquainted; that our blessed *Saviour* and his *Apostles* and the ancient *Christian* Church for more than six hundred years were not wise managers of Religion, nor prudent dispensers of the Scriptures; but like fond  
and

and foolish Fathers put a knife and a sword into the hands of their Children, with which they might easily have foreseen what mischief they would do to themselves and others. And who would not chuse to be of such a Church which is provided of such excellent and effectual means of Ignorance, such wise and infallible methods for the prevention of knowledge in the people, and such variety of close shutters to keep out the light?

I have chosen to insist upon this Argument, because it is so very plain, that the most ordinary capacity may judge of this usage and dealing with the souls of men: which is so very gross that every man must needs be sensible of it; because it toucheth men in the common rights of humane nature, which belong to them as much as the light of heaven, and the air we breath in.

It requires no subtilty of wit, no skill in Antiquity, to understand these Controversies between Us and the Church of Rome. For there are no *Fathers* to be pretended on both sides in these Questions: They yield we have Antiquity on ours: And we refer it to the common sense of Mankind, which Church, that of *Rome* or *Ours*, hath all the right and reason

reason in the world on her side in these debates? And who they are that tyrannize over Christians, the Governours of their Church or ours; who use the people like sons and freemen, and who like slaves; who feed the flock of Christ committed to them, and who take the Childrens bread from them? Who they are that when their Children ask bread, for bread give them a stone, and for an egg a serpent; I mean the *Legends* of their *Saints* instead of the holy *Scriptures*, which are able to make men wise unto salvation: And who they are that lie most justly under the suspicion of Errours and Corruptions, they who bring their Doctrine and Practices into the open light, and are willing to have them tryed by the true touchstone, the *Word of God*; or they who shun the light, and decline all manner of tryal and examination; and who are most likely to carry on a worldly design, they who drive a trade of such mighty gain, and advantage under pretence of Religion, and make such markets of the ignorance and sins of the people; or we whom malice it self cannot charge with serving any worldly design by any allowed Doctrine or Practice of our Religion? For we make no

L I

money

money of the mistakes of the people, nor do we fill their heads with vain fears of new places of torment to make them willing to empty their purses in a vainer hope of being delivered out of them. We do not like them pretend a mighty bank and treasure of Merits in the Church, which they sell to the people for ready money, giving them bills of Exchange from the *Pope to Purgatory*; when they who grant them, have no reason to believe they will avail them, or be accepted in the other World.

For our parts we have no fear that our people should understand Religion too well: We could wish, with *Moses*, that *all the Lord's people were prophets*: We should be heartily glad the people would read the holy Scriptures more diligently, being sufficiently assured that it is their own fault if they learn any thing but what is good from thence: We have no Doctrines or Practices contrary to Scripture, and consequently no occasion to keep it close from the sight of the people, or to hide any of the Commandments of God from them: We leave these mean arts to those who stand in need of them.

In a word, there is nothing which God hath said to men, which we desire should  
be

be concealed from them: Nay, we are willing the people should examine what we teach, and bring all our Doctrines *to the Law and to the Testimony*; that if they be not according to *this Rule*, they may neither believe them nor us. 'Tis only things false and adulterate which shun the light and fear the touchstone. We have that security of the truth of our Religion, and of the agreeableness of it to the word of God; that honest confidence of the goodness of our Cause, that we do not forbid the people to read the best Books our Adversaries can write against it.

And now let any impartial man judge whether this be not a better argument of a good Cause, to leave men at liberty to try the grounds of their Religion, than the courses which are taken in the Church of *Rome*, to awe men with an *Inquisition*; and, as much as is possible, to keep the common people in Ignorance, not only of what their late Adversaries, the *Protestants*, but their chief and ancient Adversary, the *Scriptures* have to say against them.

A man had need of more than common security of the skill and integrity of those to whom he perfectly resigns his understanding; this is too great a Trust to be



reposed in humane frailty, and too strong a temptation to others to impose upon us; to abuse our blindness, and to make their own ends of our voluntary Ignorance and easie credulity. This is such a folly as if a rich man should make his Physician his heir: which is to tempt him either to destroy him or to let him dye, for his own interest. So he that trusts the care of his soul with other men, and at the same time by *irrevocable Deed* settles his understanding upon them, lays too great a temptation before them to seduce and damn him for their own ends.

And now to reflect a little upon our selves. What cause have we to bless God who are so happily rescued from that more than *Egyptian* darkness and bondage, wherein this Nation was detained for several Ages: who are deliver'd out of the hands of those cruel task-masters, who required brick without straw: that men should be religious without competent understanding, and work out their own salvation while they denyed them the means of all others the most necessary to it; who are so uncharitable as to allow us no salvation out of their Church, and yet so unreasonable as to deny us the very best means of salvation when we are in it?

Our

Our Fore-fathers thought it a mighty privilege to have the Word of God restored to them, and the publick prayers and service of God celebrated in a known Tongue. Let us use this inestimable privilege with great modesty and humility, not to the nourishing of pride and self-conceit, of division and faction; but as the Apostle exhorts, *Let the word of God dwell richly in you, in all wisdom; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, unto which ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful.*

It concerns us mightily (with which admonition I shall conclude) both for the honour, and support of our Religion, to be at better union among our selves, and not to divide about lesser things: and so to demean our selves, as to take from our Adversaries all those pretences whereby they would justify themselves, or at least extenuate the guilt of that heavy charge, which falls every whit as justly upon them as ever it did upon the Scribes and Pharisees, of taking away the key of knowledge, and shutting the kingdom of heaven against men; neither going in themselves, nor suffering those that are entering to go in.

## A Catalogue of Books.

**T**HE WORKS of the Learned Dr. Isaac Barrow, late Master of Trinity College in Cambridge: Published by the Reverend Dr. Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury: in three Volumes in Folio.

The first containing Thirty two Sermons, preached upon several Occasions; an Exposition of the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue; a Learned Treatise of the Pope's Supremacy; a Discourse concerning the Unity of the Church: also some Account of the Life of the Authour, with Alphabetical Tables.

The Second Volume containing Sermons and Expositions upon all the Apostles Creed: with an Alphabetical Table; and to which may be also added the Life of the Authour.

The Third Vol. containing forty six choice Sermons upon several Subjects, with an Alphabetical Table: which are the last that will be printed in English of this Learned Authour.

Of Contentment, Patience and Resignation to the Will of God: By Isaac Barrow, D.D. in 8<sup>o</sup>. being part of the Third Volume.

In Michaelmas Term 1686, will be published a Volume in Folio in Latine of Dr. Barrows containing his Opuscula Theologica, Poematia, Orationes, &c. Ser-

## A Catalogue of Books.

*Sermons and Discourses upon several Occasions: in three Volumes in 8<sup>o</sup>. By Dr. Tillotson Dean of Canterbury.*

*The Rule of Faith: or an Answer to the Treatise of Mr. J. S. Entitled Sure-footing, &c.*

*All Printed for Brabazon Aylmer.*

---

## Books Printed for William Rogers.

**T***HE Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome truly Represented; in answer to a Book intituled, A Papist Misrepresented and Represented, &c.*

*An Answer to a Discourse intituled, Papists Protesting against Protestant Popery: Being a Vindication of Papists not Misrepresented by Protestants: and containing a particular Examination of Monsieur de Meaux, late Bp. of Condom, his Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of Rome, in the Articles of Invocation of Saints and the Worship of Images occasioned by that Discourse.*

*A Ser-*

## A Catalogue of Books.

A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral of the Reverend Benj. Calamy D. D. and late Minister of St. Lawrence Jewry London Jan. 7th. 1686. By William Sherlock D. D. Master of the Temple, and Chaplain in ordinary to His Majesty. The Necessity, Dignity and Duty of Gospel Ministers discours'd of before the University of Cambridge.

A New and easie Method to learn to sing by Book (whereby one who hath a good Voice and Ear) may without other help, learn to sing true by Notes. Design'd chiefly for, and applyed to, the promoting of Psalmody, and furnished with variety of Psalm Tunes in Parts, with Directions for that kind of singing.

The Parsons Counsellor, with the Duty of Tithes or Tithing. In two Books. The first sheweth the Order every Parson Year, Sec. ought to observe in obtaining a Spiritual Preferment, and what Duties are incumbent upon him after the taking the same and many other things necessary for every Clergy Man to know and observe. The second sheweth in what manner all sorts of Tithes, Offerings, Adornments, and other Church Duties, are to be paid, as well in London as elsewhere, and as well by the Canon as Common and Statute Law, and in what Courts and manner they may be recovered, what charges they are subject to, and many other things concerning the same, necessary for Clergy Men, and all others to know. The fourth Edition Corrected and Enlarged in many particulars through the whole Book with a Table, &c. Written by Sir Simon Degge, Knight.



The End of the Catalogue.

[illegible]